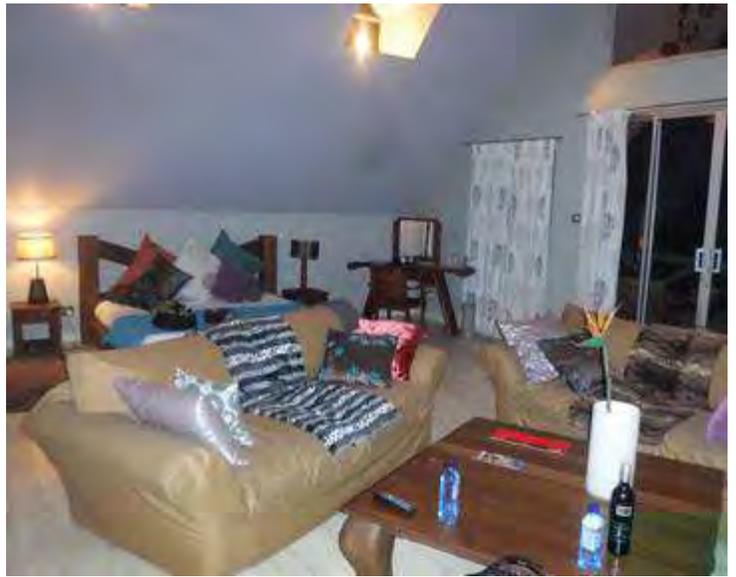
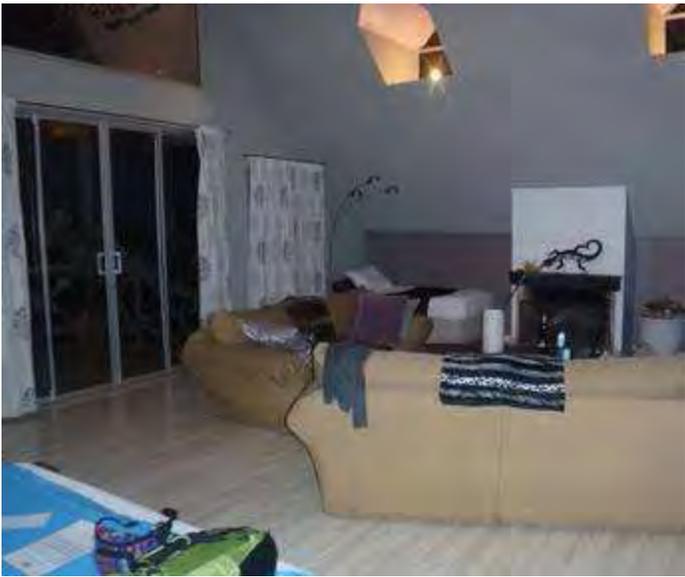


**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 13, 2018 1:48 PM  
**To:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #11 - Nairobi, Kenya

Hi Everyone – Soooo, the second half of the African Adventure starts! Our Fearless Four got a jump on everyone & arrived a day early! Let's get going!



We landed at Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta International Airport about 10pm. Immigration was very slow, but we found a nice young man from the Netherlands to chat with that helped us pass the time. Luckily OAT had arranged for someone to meet us. He was not from OAT, but a local contracted tour company. He was okay, but seemed to take a bit too long

to get us out of there. Wanted everyone to get Kenyan Shillings. George, Don & John finally went to get \$50 worth, just to satisfy him. The funniest thing about the airport was this huge sign that said, "UBER is Swahili for UBER!" So we already know one Swahili word! Cool!!! Took about 45 minutes to get to our hotel. The streets were in quite a mess – Boma said that there had been lots of rain & the roads were washed out from flooding. Hopefully the rain is mostly done! It did drizzle a little during the drive, but fine when we got there. Had to drive right through downtown Nairobi. Never took a single picture. Regret that now! But after we got to the hotel, we were taken to a small room & they sat us down on some sectional couches. No regular reception area! And it was super noisy – they said there had been a wedding & the reception party was going on! Didn't really see many people, but a live band was playing somewhere. Worried about that, but then they walked us over to our cabins & it was quiet over there. When they showed us into our room, I was flabbergasted! Must be the largest hotel room we have ever ever been assigned! The bathroom alone was as big as a regular hotel room!! Crazy! Found out later that there were only 8 rooms & they were all almost exactly alike! There was even a fireplace that they offered to light, but we said no for now! Took forever to get settled so didn't make it to bed until 2am!!!



Although George & I slept through breakfast, the others made it & I even got a picture – thanks to Jan & Facebook! We did eventually make it out of bed before noon & wandered around the beautiful grounds. It was dampish, but not raining & quite warm.



After a group planning session, we decided to go to the Nairobi Giraffe Center. It was about a 20 minute taxi ride from our lodge & looked to be the best option to get us away from the lodge for a while. The lodge staff arranged 2 taxi's for us. Nairobi has a very bad reputation for crime, so we were all a bit leery of being out & about on our own. Even the taxi ride was a major adventure! We had to split up & we took different routes. Our lodge was located in what is considered "the garden suburb of Nairobi." The area is named after Karen Blixen – the author of "Out of Africa." We passed by her farm enroute – it is now a museum. Most of the street pictures are compliments of Jan, mine were mostly blurry & I deleted them. Jan did a great job of documenting the interesting blend of streetside markets & foot traffic. Since it was Sunday, we saw lots of ladies all dressed up. How about that lady in red with her matching high heels! There were gentlemen in suits also, sometimes holding hands with small children, but I didn't get any useful pictures of them. The streets, like we had noticed last night were in abysmal condition. Assume a lot of that was due to the recent flooding? Tons of trash on the streets also. Unlike all the other places we've visited in Africa, these folks didn't smile & wave when you drove by. But of course we were just in a local taxi, not a tourist bus, so maybe that was part of the difference?

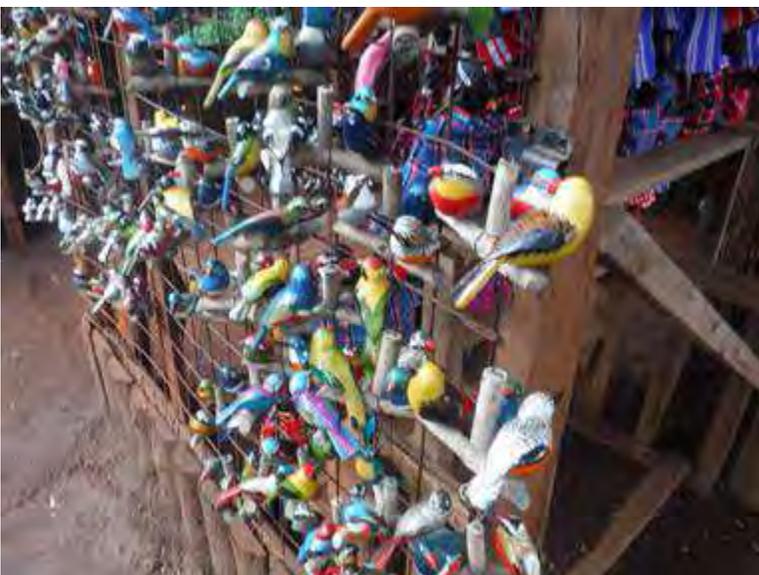


I took the opportunity to just copy & paste this info from Wikipedia on “The **Giraffe Center** is located in [Lang'ata](#), approximately 5 kilometres (3.1 mi) from the centre of [Nairobi, Kenya](#). It was established in order to protect the endangered [Rothschild giraffe](#), *Giraffa camelopardalis rothschildi*, that is found only in the grasslands of [East Africa](#).

In 1979, the Giraffe Center, a nature sanctuary for visiting and including wildlife conservation education for urban school children, was started by Jock Leslie Melville, the Kenyan grandson of a Scottish Earl, when he and his wife [Betty](#) captured two baby giraffe to start a programme of breeding giraffe on their Langata property, site of the present Centre. Since then the programme has had huge success, resulting in the introduction of several breeding pairs of Rothschild Giraffe into Kenyan national parks.

By 1983 enough money had been raised to establish the Giraffe Visitor's Center as a tourist destination just outside Nairobi.

The main attraction for both school children and visitors is feeding giraffes from a raised observation platform. The Giraffe Center is also home to several [warthogs](#) which freely roam the area along with the giraffe.”



We had a talk by one of the Giraffe Center workers. He explained that there are 3 types of Giraffe in Kenya – the Rothschild, the Reticulated, & the Masai. The Rothschild is the one that is on the endangered list. We mostly saw the Reticulated giraffe. The center can only have 12 giraffe at one time & they were currently full. They all had different

personalities. One of the females had been attacked by a lion while in the center & didn't like to be touched. Most of them enjoyed the interaction with people. The one question I asked was how the giraffes were reintroduced into the wild after they had such close interaction with people. He assured me that when they were 3 to 4 years old, they separated them from the tourist area to force them to feed on their own. After about 6 months they considered them ready to be reintroduced into the wild. Assume they are successful, haven't heard of any incidents where the giraffe approach a jeep of tourist to be fed! We spent a lovely couple of hours at the Center. After enjoying feeding them (once again I didn't participate in the extreme feeding where folks held the food in their own mouth & let the Giraffe use their tongues to extract the food! – Bit too much interaction as far as I was concerned!!!), we took a look at the far fields where other giraffes were eating on their own & then wandered around the picnic area & the outside Gift stores. My favorite was a separate building where a young man did his own bird carvings. He had a bird book & was particular to make fairly accurate representations. He designed them in many different combinations. It was lots of fun to look through them all! We don't really have a place for anything like that, so I brought some back to hang at Tom & Marge's!!



Our return back to the lodge was uneventful (we managed a negotiation with our Taxi drivers to pay US Dollars cash instead of Kenyan shillings). Enjoyed seeing a few Kenyan nuns on the street & some really trashy area markets! Then back at the lodge, we noticed some extra decorations that must have been put up for yesterday's wedding!



To round out the day, we decided to have dinner at one of the lovely tables sprinkled around outside. The resident dogs & cat kept us company (chasing each other around on occasion!). We discovered that most of us really like the local Kenyan beer – Tuskers. I’ve already researched it & found it is sold at Total Wine in Gilbert! Yippee! Have to get some for a After Africa party in Mesa!



While we were having dinner I noticed some birds flitting through the garden. Managed to take a picture & identified it as a Collared Sunbird – the Hummingbird of Africa! They are nectar eaters that can hover much like a hummingbird. I downloaded the good picture on the flower from Wikipedia!



That evening it came a pretty serious rain, but we invited John & Connie over & relaxed by our fire for a while! A Lodge staff worker (in formal attire, please notice!) came to start the fire, but if it hadn't been for John, the boy scout, the fire wouldn't have stayed lit! The wood was soaked & he had to constantly mess with it to keep it burning. Worked for me & Connie – we just sat back & let the boys play (George did help occasionally!) By the way – not that it is that important, but just so you know, our huge room had some really really strange aspects! First off, the shower system was really strange. Couldn't quite figure it out & even after multiple calls both before, during & after our showers, we basically had cold showers both mornings! And also, the sink in that humongous bathroom was a huge flat granite slab that splattered water within a 2' radius. Really really strange! Otherwise, our stay here in Nairobi was quite pleasant! We had planned to stay awake to welcome our incoming folks (Joe & Debbie Krivan and Jan Roberts and Joyce Hall), but the warm fire, the wine, & the rain on the roof were more than we could stand & we were in bed by about 10pm!



The next morning we met up with Joe, Debbie, Jan, & Joyce at breakfast! Turns out they didn't get to the lodge until 1am! They had an even worse experience getting through immigration! Glad we didn't try to stay up to meet them! Says Pam selfishly! The same local guide, Boma, met us with a bus & took us to a smaller Domestic Airport for our flight to the Masai Mara. He got us checked in & we settled in to wait for our flight. Joe & Debbie had brought Ken & Sue with them, so we got a picture to make sure they knew we had them with us!! The funniest thing to me was that after they had checked & weighed our duffle bags (they separated us into 2 planes for some reason), the bags were taken out the front door (I followed to see what was going on!) & loaded them into what looked like a small private station wagon. Apparently it drove around the airport & delivered the bags to our plane!! Small airport logistics! This particular flight was the one that caused us the most logistical problems. According to the OAT paperwork, we were limited to 33 lbs per person total – including any carry ons & they didn't seem too concerned about the duffle bags weights either. Maybe if all of us had been big, there would have been more of an issue?? Anyway, looks like we all spent a lot of time agonizing over nothing!



Eventually they called for our flight (all of us except Don & Sue and Dan – they had split up Dan & Jan!! - & they followed on a different flight) & we trudged across the taxiway to our small Cessna Caravan 208B. Note another funny thing – the hangars were marked Phoenix!! Did we take a wrong turn somewhere????



We almost immediately flew over Kibera – the largest slum in Africa. We thought the one in Cape Town was big (400,000 people), but Kibera is listed as containing 700,000 people!!! Holy crap! That's a lot of poverty. But according to Google, Mumbai, India (1,000,000); Neza, Mexico (1,200,000); & Orangi Town, Pakistan (2,400,000) beat them out. Ick!



The rest of the flight (less than an hour) was uneventful – just lots of green green green down there. Didn't see any animals!

I'll save our arrival to the Masai Mara for the next report! Tata!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Friday, June 15, 2018 2:30 PM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #12 - Masai Mara

Good Evening Everyone,

Time to get to our few days on the Masai Mara. This was a totally different experience. So on with it!!



So here we are – all excited to step foot on the Masai Mara – northern end of the Serengeti Plains! Our Maasai guide (if you notice the difference in spelling – it is purposeful! Our guide said that Maasai is the people and Masai is the land) was George (he said Ole’ was his Maasai name, but we mostly just called him George!). He was absolutely brilliant. Very easy to understand & an awesome spotter. The other 3 landed within a few minutes of us – just the 3 of them & a single man on that flight, but guess that’s why they had split us up, since there was a single guy, they had to use 2 planes anyway.



We immediately got our first opportunity to “mark our territory,” as George (the Maasai guide – not my George!) said. The toilet facility was pretty filthy, but we made do. There were tons of Lesser Tailed Swallows darting around. We had 2 jeeps waiting for us – 6 per jeep & off we went. Didn’t even take time to check out all the souvenirs for sale. They apparently know when the planes are arriving & show up to show off their wares!



We only had a short drive to our lodge, but the hour was full of animals! Had a mock charge by an elephant, spotted a tower of giraffe that looked spectacular against the golden grass, then a herd of elephant with lots of little ones. Incredible!



It continued almost to the door of the lodge – our first Topi just posed for us & our first Grants Gazelle. As we arrived at the lodge, they were singing & playing instruments to greet us. Yep, gonna be a nice visit!





After a lovely lunch (buffet style with 3 choices for dessert! Wow!), they showed us to our tent cabins, large with a deck attached to the back & thatch over plastic roof. There is a beautiful pool area too. Hot water 24/7! Looking forward to a hot shower!



After a couple hours to get settled, we met back at the lodge. Joe brought Ken & Sue to head out on our first official afternoon safari in the park! We had to drive through a Maasai Village to get into the park. Note the young man with the water containers on his bicycle! They said he makes the ride several times a day to haul water. Bound to be heavy & hard to balance!! And the ubiquitous herd of animals. At first we thought they were all goats, then we realized they

had combined sheep & goats (cattle will show up later!). The sheep are short haired. No shearing done here – too hot for them to use wool, not to mention the grass/brush difficulties for wool. So the sheep are a breed that is short haired. The scenery was beautiful. Felt like we were on top of the world (it's between 5000' & 6200' here!). Mara actually is a Maasai world for spotted – meaning the way the terrain looks with the grasslands interspersed with clumps of acacia trees & brush.



We happened upon a couple of female lions lying right beside the road. We stopped to watch a while & realized the pride (guides knew the pride & knew that there were 16 of them!) was all around us. Dan & I spotted some warthogs on the other side of the road. After watching for a while, one of the females stood up & seemed to go on point. Without making a sound, that seemed to get the entire pride awake & heads started popping up all over.



Several of the juveniles were horribly skinny. The migration of wildebeest is a bit late this year due to all the flooding down south. They have had lots of grass, so they haven't moved north as usual. It would probably be a couple of weeks before the mobile fast food stands would arrive. Hopefully it would be soon enough for these poor starving cubs!





At one point, a cub came up to the vehicle next to us & was sniffing the tires! Pretty darn close encounter! It started raining hard enough that we had to close our roof. We were hoping to see the pride on a hunt (probably for the wart hogs we spotted earlier!), but with us having to ford a pretty steep, fast flowing creek to get back to the lodge, the guides decided we needed to head back. It was sure fun to watch this pride move around! The guides said that we had been pretty lucky, with the height of the grass recently, it had been hard to spot the lions. These had just presented themselves to us right on the road!! We drove on back to the lodge. After a short break, we went back to the lodge for Ole' to give us a talk about the problems of poaching in the Masai Mara Reserve. Just like the other parks we have visited, it's a complicated issue – trying to balance between keeping the locals happy & preserving the animals. The Rangers are allowed to shoot to kill here to defend against the poachers. Scary, but seems to be helping. Then it was time for dinner! Didn't get any pictures, but dinner was awesome! Buffet style with soup & multiple salad choices (with unusual combinations – like pineapple & beets!!!) Then multiple meat & vegetable choices. And desserts! And beer & wine! We were definitely in heaven. Quite a few of the dishes had an Indian flavor (yellow lentils & masala chicken for example) – there was a table of folks that looked Indian – not sure if the lodge was catering to them or if they always had Indian food, but whatever, it was good!



Really early morning breakfast – 5:45am!! They do breakfast really good – eggs anyway you want them & lots of other choices too. It had rained during the night, but George Ole’ had assured us that a morning rain wouldn’t effect our morning safari. On the road by 6:30am. The rain did effect us a little – we were in the lead jeep & we got stuck!! The other jeep was able to push us out! Thanks Jan for the picture from behind! Not a problem for us, we just sat in the jeep & watched the driver & George Ole’ get all muddy!



I was having a great morning! Saw some really cool birds & even managed pictures of them!!! A Wattled Lapwing, a pair of beautiful Grey Crowned-cranes, the ever present Lilac breasted Roller, and a Rosy-throated Longclaw.



As the morning drive continued, we saw our first Hartbeest (note how the horns curve & make a heart?), our first pair of Ostrich (the male has very dark black body & the female is light – we'll see better ones later), and a large family of the Kenyan version of the Helmeted Guinea fowl.



Our guides thought it was a slow morning, so when they got a call about a couple of lions, we took off at a run. Now keep in mind that they are not supposed to get off the roads in the Masai Mara, but they wanted to show us this sleeping pair of lions. They told us later that there was indeed a road there (really????), but it had not been used yet this year because of all the rain. Humm? Now look closely at that green bush that both lions are sleeping under.



So after watching these 2 girls trying to sleep for a few minutes, we headed down the small hill back to the main road. Yep, we got stuck. Not a little stuck, but a lot stuck. Our driver/guide first worked & worried, rocking us back & forth trying to get us out. We're the medium green jeep in the middle. He did not want to get out of the jeep. So look at the following pictures – yep – the worse case scenario had really happened! We were badly stuck within a few feet of

not 1, but 2 young good sized male lions!! So first someone tried to push us out. No go. Then someone got in front & our driver/guide got out (you could tell he was really jumpy!!) & hooked us up to another jeep & one pulled, while the other pushed! Still no go! So last resort was for all of us to get out to lighten the load!!!!!! Yipes, yipes, yipes! We were standing in the mud & I was watching that bush & sure enough, all the racket disturbed the lions & they were watching to see what all the noise was all about! They never left their bush, but they had moved over so they could watch. It was definitely hair raising! But without us in the jeep, they were able to get it out! Believe me, we did not go off road again. The main roads were bad enough, but we never headed out into the tall grass again!



The morning drive continued (it was still only about 9:30am!!). We had to ford some pretty serious running water (our jeep did have a snorkel!) & we were seeing some beautiful rolling hills with green green green grass! Saw another male Ostrich.





Then we received another call – this was for a mating pair of lions. We were voyeurs for 15 or 20 minutes – they were paying absolutely no attention to any of the jeeps – they had an agenda & that’s all that mattered to them. When we were here before they told us that they would not eat for several days – up to a week, while they took care of business every 5 to 10 minutes. Exhausting work! I have a video for the sound. They were both fairly vocal about the entire ordeal!



We stopped for a short morning break with views of multiple kinds of antelope all around. The guides were showing us the difference in hoof prints between the Thomson's Gazelle, the Grant's Gazelle, the Hartebeest, the Topi, & the Zebra. We decided a group shot of us with the antelope in the background would be a nice memory! George Ole' gave us some color! Couldn't resist a close up of the beautiful little Thomson's Gazelle!!





So the next sight was absolutely mind blowing. We all just sat there with our mouths hanging open. Since we've been back, I've Googled it & apparently tree climbing lions is either becoming more & more common or there are just more tourist with cameras catching the pictures. But whatever the reason – it is an amazing sight!! There were 6 of this particular pride in the tree (guides said there were many more in the actual pride).



On our way back to the lodge, we saw fat, healthy, zebra; a huge herd of Cape Buffalo; and wart hogs roaming around with more Thomson's & Grant's Gazelles! This place is Nirvana!!



After we had lunch back at the lodge, we decided to take a walk out to see the garden (suggested by George Ole'). As we headed out, the Master Gardener himself met us & took us out to show us his area! He had everything from bananas to mint to potatoes to squash. He said he had been the Master Gardener for 10 years & he maintained everything by himself! Pretty cool! Although right now it's a bit wet (it's winter here & just at the end of the wet

season), most of his crop is just started & usually he can provide almost everything for their lodge restaurant. Impressive!



After a short break, we headed back to the lodge. George Ole' had arranged for the village women to come & give us a demonstration on how they make their bead bracelets. One came to each of us with their jar of beads & helped us string them on the wire & make the hooks. It was great fun & they gave us the bracelets as a souvenir! Then we went outside to watch them dance for us. We joined them for a few minutes too. Then we asked George if they would stay & let us dance for them! They were thrilled & we got to show them how we dance! Great fun!



Then we once again loaded into the jeeps & headed off for a short afternoon safari! Ken & Sue joined us of course! We saw a Hammerkop pair on their nest & a lovely rainbow in the distance where the afternoon storm was building. Then on our way back, we saw a massive lone bull elephant. Look at the size of his tusks!!! A couple of Maasai were trying to drive their herd of sheep across the creek. They were having a hard enough time just getting them across the water &

then we showed up to make it more difficult. They managed though – appears that they might have done this a time or two! We saw a Dik Dik and a Black Backed Jackel on the way back to the lodge, but didn't get a picture. Haven't mentioned before, but if we saw something & wanted to stop, we were supposed to say a Swahili word that sounded something like "See Mama." Problem was I could never remember what I was supposed to say in time to get us to stop! But they wouldn't stop if you just said "stop!" Very frustrating! This was the only place that did that thank goodness!



Dinner that night was great. The Maasai warriors came & danced for us. We had the Indian style food again & it was marvelous! & a lovely African style tortilla, called chapati (young man was always there making them as you stood & watched). Thanks Jan for the pictures of him! It was a type of sourdough, pan fried in oil. Yummy!

Tomorrow is another full day in the Masai Mara! I'll start fresh in another Trip Report!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Monday, June 18, 2018 10:13 AM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #13 - Masai Mara cont

Hi Guys,

Still lots of stuff to cover in the Masai Mara. No time to waste!





After another early morning breakfast, we hit the road. Once again it had rained most of the night, but cleared up by the time we headed to breakfast. So I should mention that we only had power in our tent cabins from 5am until 10pm (they used a generator). I had been getting up at 4:30am, so I was showering by candlelight! Too funny! Just another African experience! I did have hot shower water at this camp – guess it just stayed hot from having been heated up until

10pm? Anyway, breakfast was again good. They made a crepe like thing that they called pancakes (similar to the Chipati). It was sweeter dough, they did have syrup, but I just folded it and ate it with my oatmeal! Anyway, as we passed the Maasai Village, George Ole' stopped to talk to some of them & found out they were milking. Jan wanted to join in & George Ole' was thrilled, so we all hopped out and Jan & Dan and Jan Roberts tried their hand at it. Jan Roberts obviously really knew what she was doing. The Villagers were loving it! The rest of us just stood around & laughed & took pictures!! I noticed one of the ladies had lovely beading on their ankles. They brought me some to try, but my ankles were way too big!!!



After our 3 finished their turn at the udders (by the way, did you notice that there was usually a calf feeding on one udder while another was being milked? – I'm not sure I will be drinking milk at breakfast tomorrow! Ha!!), we loaded up & hit the road. We passed by these adorable children in their school uniforms ready to cross the creek! Notice the sticks the older girl is carrying? We were told that they are all required to bring a stick with them to school to help with the fires needed at school. And sure enough, almost every time we saw a child, they were carrying at least one stick! There was a lot of water both beside & on the road this morning. It rained hard last night. But that had brought out the birds. This Hammerkop was looking for breakfast!



We had just gotten on the main road, when our guides got a call & we obviously headed somewhere quickly & with purpose! Sure enough, we were soon parked & watching a coalition of 5 Cheetahs!!! Wow! Our 2 jeeps were the only ones there too! We enjoyed watching them for quite a while. Although they appeared relaxed, they were constantly moving around. A hyena approached them, but either they didn't have any food or he decided the 5 of them were too formidable, so he moved on without them seeming to even be aware of him.





After the hyena had wandered off, a herd of Hartebeest came along the horizon. Not real close, but close enough that they became aware of the cheetahs & started to run! The cheetahs must not have been hungry because they paid them no mind at all. We could see the Masai Mara Balloon floating far in the distance. Apparently the Balloon staff had spotted the cheetahs on their way to work & told our guys. George Ole' told us that this particular coalition of cheetahs had been studied by National Geographic & we'd probably see a story about them on TV. I have been Googling & haven't found anything from National Geo, but found mention of them from something called the Cheetah Project & also a blog about them from last September – see picture above showing them bringing down a wildebeest. According to what I read, only 2 of them are really brothers, the others just were somehow drawn in as a loose group of friends. As we were watching, we saw a group of elephants standing a long way off. They were in a loose circle facing in to each other & very still. They weren't eating or moving. George Ole' said that they had probably either found a dead elephant or elephant bones and they were mourning a family loss. It was eerie to think of them being that emotional. They stayed in that position the entire time we were there.



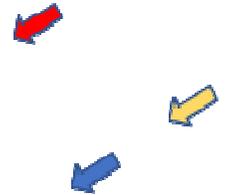
We circled around to the other side as other jeeps started arriving & got a shot of the cheetahs from the other side as they all started moving off. What a beautiful morning!



As the morning progressed, we got some really close up interactions with various animals. It is obvious that this place is animal paradise! Keep in mind that my zoom is pretty pathetic!



We made our way to the Talek river to see some hippos during our morning coffee break. Some of us apparently need the coffee more than others! But we all enjoyed watching the hippos. Thought it was a nice setting for another group picture – hippos in the background!



I thought you might want a general idea of where we were! The first map is Kenya – as you can see, it is surrounded by Tananiza on the south, Somalia on the east & Uganda on the west. Ethiopia is to the north. We flew from Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe (way south) to Nairobi (blue arrow). Then from Nairobi to the Keekorak Airstrip in the Masai Mara. On the big map, Masai Mara is the orange arrow. On to the next map, Keekorok Airstrip is the blue arrow and we landed there & got in jeeps to drive to our lodge – Mara Sentrin, just outside the Sekenani Gate (yellow arrow). On our furtherest drive, we went to the Talek river – approximately the red arrow.



We made a fairly steady drive back to the lodge. Saw lots of animals, but nothing much noteworthy other than stopping for a while to watch these young male giraffes beating on each other with the heads & necks. They didn't appear to be serious about it, just teenagers rough housing! There was a huge mixed herd of antelopes just as we got back to our lodge turn off.



Back at the lodge, we had lunch, then most of us bought a few beaded things from the village ladies. Then a short break back at our cabins before meeting with George Ole' for him to tell us a few of the traditions of the Maasai. The most common are to burn the childrens legs & arms with hot sticks at the age of 4, pull the incisors at the age of 12, slit the earlobes & pierce the upper edge of the ear, & at about 17, to perform circumcision without anesthetic. All of these traditions are to encourage bravery & stoicism. It is common to shave their heads also. Until it became illegal, the only way to become a warrior was to kill a lion. Now they can kill a Cape Buffalo to prove their skill & bravery. He showed us his shield, his long haired wig, his staff & his necklace of courage that he had gathered his own crocodile eggs for his mother to use to make it. Sometimes they are promised in marriage before they are born – to someone from another clan. He had never seen his wife until their wedding day. He was thrilled that his Mom had chosen a women so beautiful to be his wife! One of the head ladies from the village came to show off her wedding necklace & bead chains. During his talk, we were visited by a black headed oriole & a White browed Robin chat (remember the mockingbird of Africa?). It sang for us while he talked!



We headed out to hunt rhinos & leopards at sunset. Didn't find any, but enjoyed seeing some Little Bee Eaters, & the Common Fork-tailed Drongo.



We saw a couple of single lions, Remember the skinny cubs we saw on the first day as we came into the park? Well, our guides pointed out a Park Rangers' Jeep out in the park, on their way to kill an old Cape Buffalo (just a dot, but it's in the picture!) & leave it for the pride. Sadly, while we were out, we saw them get stuck. Not sure if it was mud or if they had a flat tire, but either way, they were in trouble. As we went back into the park, we passed the Head Ranger. He was

calling out the calvery – so to speak. We were worried that they might have been feeding the pride a bit more than they had planned!!!



But the best was the most gorgeous sunset! It was amazing! We could see rain off in the distance. The colors were magnificent. Remember me saying we felt like we were on top of the world?? Well here it is. It was awe inspiring! Beautiful memories of the Masai Mara!!



I didn't get any pictures from our last dinner at the Mara Sentrim. But more great memories of a wonderful dinner although it did start raining & our tent steward loaned us an umbrella to walk back to our cabin. It rained most of the night, but it was a nice rain that encouraged good sleeping. And we got to sleep late (6:15am!!) so that we even had electric lights for our shower!!! How nice is that??? Our plan today was to have breakfast, do a 3 hour safari enroute to the airport & then fly back to Nairobi. Anyway, we were all shocked that George Ole' met us wearing a nice suit! Didn't recognize him! He was going back to Nairobi for some additional tests for licensing. He had hoped to maybe fly with us, but we were filling the plane this time, so he was going to take public transportation! We hated to part ways, but we all waved goodbye to our fabulous Maasai Mara guide in the village at the National Reserve entrance.



Almost immediately after dropping off George Ole', we got a call & headed off on a mission. They had heard of a lioness with 2 cubs. Unfortunately, this was a goat rope. There were already several jeeps there when we arrived. We saw the lioness almost immediately. She was crossing the road in a very deliberate manner, but her 2 cubs were spooked by all the jeeps. Not only were they all around, but they were revving engines & jockeying for the best viewing position. It was obviously distressing for the cubs & was the only time during the entire trip that it was obvious that there are way way too many tourist. If the animals are to survive, there is going to have to be some sort of limit. We heard later that the rangers showed up & broke the feeding frenzy up, but it was certainly sickening to see the cubs so distressed. We were relieved when they made it across the road.





The remainder of our 3 hour safari was amazing! We saw a beautiful Tree Agama lizard, a Splendid Starling, a congress of Baboons, a Malibou Stork (near the airport – almost everytime we’ve seen this stork it has been at an airport!), an exciting hyena chase of a herd of Grants Gazelle’s, & a mock charge from a family of 3 Elephants! What a morning & what memories we’ll have of the Masai Mara!!!!





Too soon we were back to the Keekorok Airstrip. A plane landed & started off loading duffle bags for the next OAT group! We boarded & flew back to Nairobi! It was a beautiful flight back. And I'll continue with the last part of the African adventure in Tanzania in the new Report! Until then – sleep well & stay healthy!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*  
Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)  
Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)  
Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 21, 2018 12:26 PM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #14 - Arusha

Good Afternoon Everyone,

Time to start the final phase of our Awesome African Adventure! Here we go in Tanzania!



After an easy 50 minute flight from the Keekorak Airstrip to Nairobi at the Wilson Domestic Airport, we met Lube, our Tanzanian guide who took us to our bus transportation, gave us box lunches & started giving us an overview of our next 12 days under his logistical control! First we had about a hundred mile drive almost due south to the Kenya/Tanzania border. It was an uneventful drive & the immigration experience was very nice. We all had our Kenyan & Tanzanian

visas & both countries shared a very nice building for Immigration & Customs. We were shuttled in on one end for our passport checks, while the bus driver took the van with our luggage through the custom checks outside. We basically walked about 10' from the out of Kenya to the into Tanzania windows. Took about 10 minutes. Very simple & professional. One thing I thought was funny, at the Kenya departure window, they asked me what DC stood for. Took me a minute to figure out what they meant, then I realized they meant Washington DC! So I answered District of Columbia & they were happy. Apparently checking to see if I was really an American? The other interesting thing is at every Immigration stop, in or out of every country, they took my finger prints in their machine. George never had to do it. Only a couple of other folks did & no one but me had to do it at every one. I guess I just look suspicious???



We got views of a beautiful mountain – Mount Meru (14,968’ – the 5<sup>th</sup> highest mountain in Africa & 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in Tanzania after Mount Kilimanjaro). There was another couple of hours or so of driving to our lodge in Arusha & no potty break planned. So we made an unscheduled stop at a service station. While there, we saw some really interesting items being transported on the locally used Chinese motorcycles! Lots of the motorcycles are actually somewhat like the

UBER of rural Africa. They can be seen on the sides of the roads everywhere, just waiting for someone needing a ride or way to get something delivered.



As we turned off the highway in Arusha to get to our lodge, we got a glimpse of Mt Kilimanjaro on the horizon. Lube called the mountain “the shy lady” & said we were lucky to see her. She is 19,341’ above Sea level, but only 16,100’ from it’s base. We got another view towards the end of the trip. Then onto one of the roughest roads we ever drove on to get to our lodge! It was crazy – no pictures of it. Can’t imagine driving it on a daily basis! Check in was easy & the resident house cat welcomed us with lots of love. I forgot to get a picture of our room – this is a stock photo from their website, but it was pretty close to the real deal. Huge bed with netting all around. Wish I had gotten a picture of the bathroom – the toilet was in a separate cubicle with sort of swinging saloon doors. Big nice shower too. We stayed up to greet Marlyn & Michele! They arrived about 10pm to join the group.



Breakfast the next morning was quite nice. Really large breakfast area with lots of choices – eggs made to order of course. Got to talking to Gilbert, the chef & he wanted me to stand with his egg cook for a picture! He asked lots of questions about the US. He really wanted to come visit! While we were having breakfast, several little monkeys came around to play. One of the waitresses gave them treats to make them show off for us.



Found a HUGE snail on the wall of Marlyn & Michele's place. I put my hand on the wall next to it to give a size reference! Then found a huge millipede. Didn't want to put my hand next to it!!! But it was understandable for the critters to be around because this place is a real garden spot! Marlyn & Michele brought Ken & Sue with us for the day's adventures!



Before we headed out for our day's excursions, we went for a walk around the lodge. He showed us the coffee beans growing on the grounds, views of the nearby local villages on the surrounding hillsides, the avocado trees, both green & yellow bamboo (first time to see how the shoots come up from the roots), & other tropical flowers just growing wild.





Our first major stop of the day was probably the most important of the trip. It is a non profit company called “Safe Water Ceramics of East Africa.” It is one of the places supported by the Grand Circle Foundation (Grand Circle is OAT’s parent organization). This company’s whole focus is to provide safe drinking water to the people. As we drove to Arusha, Lube had pointed out a couple of water collection spots – we were driving & my camera does not get good moving pictures, so I never managed a picture. Anyway, they were always mobbed with long lines of folks waiting to collect water in buckets, bottles, jars, obviously in anything they could. Bottom line is that most of Eastern Africa does not have a clean water delivery system, no public resevoirs, no pipelines, some wealthy people have their own wells, but generally not available to the public. Most villages in Tanzania do not have clean water available in their homes. This company has been functioning for many years. I’ve lost some of the specific details – maybe Jan will remember – she was taking notes! But anyway, years ago, a Tanzanian man developed this ceramic water filter that filters water to make it 99% pure. A US woman found out about him & together they put together this program to provide a water filter system that will provide 5 gallons of pure water in an hour & last for 5 years. The entire system including bucket with nozzle, instructions, & cleaning brush for the filter costs \$40. They gave us a demonstration of how they make the filters. It is a specific blend of ingredients including colloidal silver that makes the filter. They have a kiln to fire the ceramic. They have donated another kiln to a school that also builds the filters. OAT brings their groups here & when we purchase filters, we get to deliver them ourselves during the rest of our trip. Most of us purchased filters to deliver. The manager demonstrated how it works by taking a glass of nasty looking dirty water & having it come out crystal clear. It was amazing! You can read a little more about this program on line at the US website - <http://www.safewater.org/> or their Facebook site <https://www.facebook.com/swcea/> And of course there will be more about our deliveries!



After the spiel about the Ceramic Filter, the Mom (isn't she gorgeous??) gave a regular pottery demonstration & asked for a volunteer to try it. Dan stepped up & did a pretty darn good job! They helped with advice & hands on help, while the rest of us provided laughter & shouted nonsensical instructions! It was great fun for all, I think?



We loaded back into the bus & headed to our next stop. Just the drive through the streets of Arusha was an adventure. This particular area of this city of close to 1 million people is a thriving business district. But most of the businesses are tiny little individually owned enterprises. To be honest, until we signed up for this trip, I had never heard of Arusha, but it is the international hub for anyone coming to the Serengeti or Mount Kilimanjaro. Most of the little shops looked like hand made shacks selling everything from butcher shops to clothes to cell phone companies!! School children in uniforms seemed to be everywhere & often accompanied by a male. Lube said that children were considered the responsibility of everyone in the area, so any children without an adult would be taken care of by whom ever was near them!



The next stop was really heart breaking. It was a home/school/business for Albino persons. These people have been born without the normal protective pigment in their skin. This is a relatively rare condition in most of the world, occurring in about 1 out of 20,000 in the west, but in Tanzania, there is 1 baby born with Albinism in every 1500 births. There are strange cultural beliefs that cause issues for both those born with the problem & their parents. Although it has recently become against the law, there are traditional healers that claim that an albino body part included in a potion or charm will bring great wealth & good fortune. That means that most of those born with this disease have to live their lives in hiding! And to make matters worse, they usually have severe eyesight issues. Most are legally blind! This place is dedicated to helping both the individuals themselves by teaching them skills & education, but it also provides support for their parents. This is another organization supported by Grand Circle Foundation. They were all very friendly & sweet. They were selling hand made cloth crafts – place mats, bags, coin purses, etc. We all bought a few items. I found this wonderful description of the place & the founder on OAT's website if you want to read about it. <https://www.oattravel.com/community/the-inside-scoop/the-buzz/growing-up-in-the-sun>



Next stop was Asili Resort. The setting for the restaurant was gorgeous. They started with a cooking demonstration. One of the dishes was coconut chicken. After showing it to us, the chef started explaining that the “chicken” was really “domestic cat”. After getting us all going about that, he finally admitted that it was a word that had something to do with the way it was cooked – much like our “hotDOGS!” It was too funny. I got to stir the polenta! Holy crap! I had no idea how difficult that is! The polenta gets heavier & heavier. Like stirring concrete! They grilled lots of types of meats & also potatoes. There was a really hot spicy sauce that was excellent! Really enjoyed this place. Read later that they really call themselves an Ethiopian Restaurant.



The building was actually quite large – I didn't do much investigating, so not sure, but think there might have been hotel rooms back behind the restaurant? Anyway, there were 3D pictures all around & we especially got a kick out of the "big booty" African caricature. George & I had just written our choreography for the ICBDA convention & the song mentions a "big booty." We should put this picture on our cuesheet!! And then a picture of the common eastern toilet. Most places now have our "western" style toilets too in at least one stall, but most of the public places we stopped in Kenya & Tanzania had this style. Most were pretty clean. The combination of items in the stall was interesting to me. So toilet paper roll on the wall, round toilet brush in a little container, waste basket (probably meant for the toilet paper as most of these Eastern style toilets don't generally flush toilet paper), & the spray hose & bucket. I once went into a Japanese Community bath & they use the spray hose & bucket to wash before they getting into the community pools. Did they get that from some place in the African/Asian area or did Africa bring it from Japan?



After lunch we took a short drive around the city. First to circle the Arusha Clock Tower. It is loosely considered the midway point between Cairo, Egypt & Cape Town, South Africa – basically the middle of the African continent or midway between the original British Empires strong holds. It is not really the center, but it is celebrated as such!! Next was to circle the Arusha Declaration Memorial. In 1967, Arusha made it's National Declaration (like our Declaration of Independence): all humans are equal, all have a right to dignity & respect, etc. This memorial was built in 1977 to celebrate 10 years of the Declaration. Last was a drive by of the ring in the city centre. Pretty circular park with statues of rhino, elephant, & other wildlife inside the fence with changing media advertisement in the center.



We returned to the lodge & after a short 10 toes up (nap!!), we decided to take a walk around the lodge grounds. To give you an over view of this location, it is called Moivaro Coffee Plantation & Estate. There are 40 separate thatched cottages (some double & some single – ours was a single) set on 40 acres of property. Besides the immediate

landscaped pool area, there was a hiking path. It was well marked, but muddy in some areas & the vegetation was very thick on both sides – no views. There were a few bifarcations that we just guessed & hoped for the best! One really interesting find was this ant trail that ran all the way across the path. It was very deep & the flow of ants was like a river. Literally millions of them. Luckily they were on a mission & we were very careful not to step in their way! When we finally came out of the tunnel trail, we had made our way to the front gate of the property when we started the morning on our walk with Lube. We took a bit more time looking across the valley. Lube had told us that the excavated areas were strip mined for gravel, both for building materials & for roads. Unfortunately that has opened those areas up for severe erosion & now some of the homes built along the slopes are in danger of either sliding off or mud sliding on them.





We met a local man who led us on a guided walk around the grounds. The Lodge hires locals to work the coffee plantation & gardens. They grow bananas, mangos, avacados, tomatos, egg plant, corn, & miscellaneous other vegetables and sell it in the roadside grocery along that really rough road I mentioned before. The guide pointed out this humongeous Fig tree that had totally swallowed another tree. We've seen similar trees in Australia. It is at the end of the wet season & it has been very wet. However the dry season is beginning & they are working on a sophisticated irrigation system involving a pump. They haven't finished the system, but have a security house built to protect it & station a guard there during the night! Not sure what they are protecting? Folks taking water? Taking some of the materials like pipe? Anyway, it was interesting! We were afforded a beautiful view of Mount Meru as we started our walk.



At the top of the hillside was a "home." Didn't ask if this was the home of someone who worked at the lodge or if we had left the lodge property. This "home" was a ramshackle conglomeration of sticks & corrugated metals sheets & boards & thatch. There were 4 milk cows in an attached shed. Our guide explained that these milk cows were kept here all the time & food grass was purchased & brought to them. They didn't ever leave their pens! Kinda sad, but can't say that the cows looked particularly distressed! They jostled around & mooed a bit while we were looking. The family came out to look at us, but didn't seem to want their pictures made, so I oblidged their wishes. They had a grinding mill that was in use. Our guide showed us that they took corn husks to feed the cows & both used the kernels whole & would grind them to powder for use in polenta. This family was "well off" because they had the mill!!!! The family was friendly to us while they didn't roll out the red carpet, they didn't seem really upset that we were wandering around their home.



This gorgeous poinsettia bush was growing right at the entrance to the lodge – note that it is not Christmas, but it is displaying its beautiful red leaves! We work so hard for that. Guess this must be its native environment? That night when we met for dinner, they served us this local cocktail – watermelon juice & vodka. Humm?? George didn't like it, so I drank both of them! I wouldn't go looking for it, but it was interesting. Seemed to literally be watermelon juice, rather pulpy – possibly pulverized fruit?





The next morning, we had our luggage out by 7am. George & I had heard a Bush Baby calling before we went to bed the night before & went out to look for it, but never saw it. Heard it call right over our head in the trees! Very irritating not to see it!! But at least we knew it was there! Both had a fairly tough night for sleeping – some creature in the thatched roof played & chewed all night – really noisy! Anyway, great morning breakfast & picked out our box lunches for the long drive south to Tarangire National Park. Lube’s friends showed up to drive us. For the rest of the trip we will separate into 3 jeeps, with Lube driving on & Stanley & Kilo driving the others. They have been friends since high school & try to work together at least once a year. They have climbed Kilamenjaro 4 times together & will do their 5<sup>th</sup> climb later this year. We felt very lucky to get to have the 3 Tanzanian Muskateers!



Our first stop was an Art studio along the main road from Arusha to Tarangire NP. The gentleman that runs the place brings in local children & trains them to both paint & learn to appreciate art. It was a pleasant stop, not only to admire

(and/or purchase) the art work & hand made crafts, but it was a great place for a toilet break! The shop was clean & neat & well landscaped with chickens running loose in the garden!

I think I'll stop here for now & continue with the drive & Tarangire NP in the next edition! Hope you are still enjoying out trip!

More soon!

Love ya,.

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 24, 2018 9:02 PM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #15 - Lake Burunge

Good Evening Everyone.  
Time to move on to Tarangire NP. Let's go!



The drive after the Art Shop was quite interesting. There were herds of sheep, goats, cows and lots of little villages around water holes. Lots of folks outside (it was a Saturday!) along the roads & quite a lot of traffic too.



Lube saw a busy Maasai Market & decided we should stop & take a closer look. It was just getting going, so it wasn't totally packed yet. But lots of folks setting up to sell just about everything you could imagine. There was a cattle auction going on. We watched that for a little while. Lots of folks buying & selling.



We moved on for him to show us the gourd like containers that are used for the liquids (including the cow blood ceremony). The shop owner was really giving him a look. Not sure if she was afraid he was going to run off with it, or what! We moved on to watch the ladies sorting through their red beans – didn't seem to be a whole lot for them to be selling them! And on the "food court." The young man was cooking all sorts of meat on his grill. Lube said he killed, butchered, & cooked it all himself. He bought us some freshly grilled goat's liver. It was given to him in those plastic bags. We all tried the tender bits of it chopped into small bite size pieces. It was yummy! Never had goats liver before – especially freshly killed & butchered!



Moved on to these ladies selling different spices. Lube paid them to allow us to take pictures. The woman in charge of the group told him she would let him take pictures if he would marry her! She just laughed! I think he was a little embarrassed! They were all in such vibrant, lovely, colored wraps! More “shops” were setting up as we left. Very interesting stop!



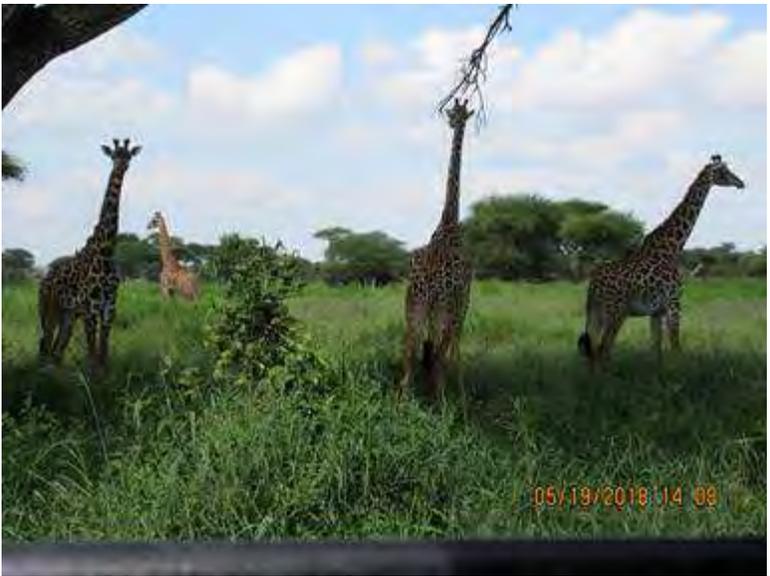
Shortly after loading back into the jeeps & hitting the road, Lube spotted a young women getting water from a muddy pond. We stopped & got to give away our first filter system! John & Connie helped with this one. After Lube explained to the lady how it works & showed everything to her, John asked if he could help her take it to her home. Turns out she lived across the road. Within view, but quite a long way to carry a 5 gallon bucket full of water, especially when it would have been one handed since a baby was on one hip! She was very happy & Lube looked extremely pleased that John had volunteered. John told us later that she had him take it inside & there was nothing inside at all – just a mud floor & bare mud walls. He said there was a broken 3 legged stool outside. And there she was – all smiles and thanking all of us over & over.



By the time John had come back across, a small crowd of women & children (and one Maasai man on a bicycle stopped to see what the commotion was!!) had gathered. We ended up giving away 2 more systems. It was really a feel good situation. Can you imagine coming to that muddy water hole every day to gather water? It would be their only water for drinking, cooking, & bathing. At least until it disappears during the dry season!



The drive to the Tarangire NP entrance was pretty short. Loved the restroom identification sign!! Should have bought one! We got our box lunches & enjoyed a relaxing outdoor picnic lunch near the shade of a huge Baobab tree.





The next couple of hours was like walking through a zoo. Only thing missing was the cages & crowds of people. We saw warthogs, ostrich (both male & female up close & several times), giraffe, monkeys, baboons, even in the restroom a African Grey Woodpecker fought for our attention.



And speaking of birds – holy crap! They were everywhere! A tree full of vultures, many sightings of the Northern White Crowned Shrike, the always beautiful Grey Crowned Cranes & a really fun sighting (both George & I even got pictures!!!!) of the Von der Decken’s Hornbill. It was really cool looking! Then we managed to get a so so picture of a Red & Yellow Barbet. And some White Backed Vultures in a Palm Tree! The Pied Crow was big & impressive! I got a really good picture of this white bird with a black tail. I’ve literally spent hours trying to look him up!!! Just can’t figure it out. He looks like an Albino Cardinal!



Just as Lube was planning on us turning back to leave the park & go check in at our lodge, he spots this Leopard in a tree!!!! Wow! We were soooooo excited! The first time that we've actually seen a leopard to get a picture!! Although how he spotted this was beyond me! It was across a river! He said he saw the vultures take off at the same time like they had seen a predator. But he gave us a beautiful gift! Our first leopard for long term viewing!!!! The last picture is the long shot of what we were looking at when Lube spotted the leopard. So we were looking at the vultures on the dead branch on the nearer tree. The leopard is in the further tree on the right! How the heck did he see that!



The safari through Tarangire NP had made us a little late for our check in at Lake Burunge Lodge (especially the Leopard!), so we had to rush out of the park & on to get checked in to what was to be my favorite lodge of the trip. Lake Burunge is a beautiful little lake, but you'll hear more about that on our walk tomorrow. We each had a separate cabin with a deck to view the lake. After our cabin assignments, we had a few minutes of free time to get unpacked & settled in for our 2 nights here. Wish it was longer!!



George & I grabbed a Tusker beer & relaxed on the deck to watch the weaver birds between us & the lake.



That night during our dinner out on the deck, we got a special treat – a wild cat, called a Genet, came to check out our meal! He was gorgeous! Not especially skittish, we chased him around the deck for pictures! Great way to end an amazing day!!!

I originally sent this out with the following day included, but it bounced back! Apparently I got too long winded with too many pictures! So broke it into 2 parts! You'll get the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Tarangire NP from Lake Burunge in the next edition!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](http://www.Hurd'sRoundDance.com)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pamspicts.shutterfly.com>

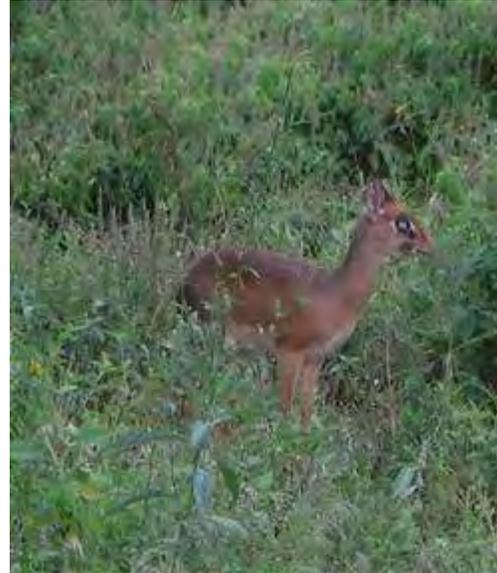
**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, June 24, 2018 9:09 PM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #16 - Lake Burunge Cont

Dearest Friends & Family,

Since I had to divide this one into 2 parts, I won't waste any more time! On to the full day at Tarangire NP from Lake Burunge Lodge.



The next morning started with a beautiful sunrise from our deck!! And then George spotted a tiny Dik Dik in the grass below us. He froze & I got a couple of pictures! After breakfast we immediately drove to the front gate of Tarangire NP. We always had to stop for our day pass & a get rid of the morning coffee. One of our guides (I think it was Kilo) made the cardinal error of leaving the windows open & paid by losing his morning snack to a quick witted monkey! Luckily they chased him away quickly!



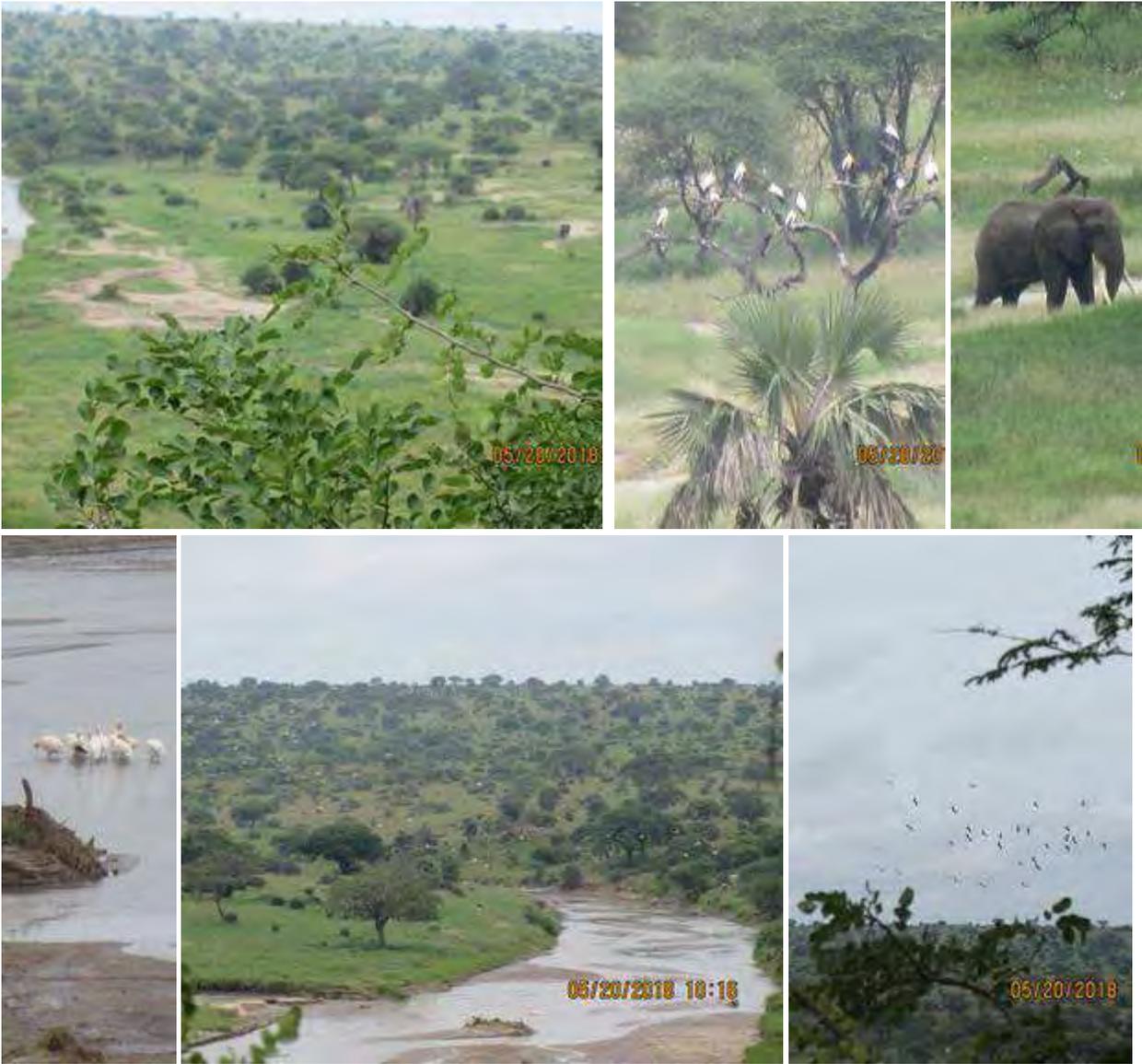
We had a quick succession of birds (with a giraffe inbetween) & I was loving the morning! First a couple of Tawny Eagles – one was just daring us to try & take away his slender mongoose breakfast! Then a pair of Long tailed Fiscal Shrikes, a Brown Snake Eagle, a Lappet Faced Vulture, & a beautiful example of a White Headed Buffalo Weaver (remember that this is one of the “Small Five?”). And a little Yellow Necked Spur Fowl.



John & Connie made a great spotting for us! A dead Cape Buffalo with multiple kinds of vultures & a Maribou Stork. Skulking in the grass are 2 Black Backed Jackals too! There was a huge herd of Cape Buffalo in the distance, but they don't show up well in these pictures.



A huge herd of elephants blocked our road for a while. Mom was quite upset with us & her children were definitely learning about how to handle those silly noisy jeep animals. She showed us who was boss before leading the herd off to continue their day.



We took a break to get out of the jeeps for a bit & enjoy this beautiful Tarangire River overlook. This little amphitheater housed hundreds of birds (flocks of White Stork & African Spoonbills) & a lone elephant.



We took a short little break to talk to 2 groups of young men. The 3 young boys in black had just had their circumcisions. This traditional ceremony takes place annually & the boys stay together for several months while they are healing – away from their families in a loose sort of school environment where they are given training needed to become men. We were allowed to ask them questions & Dan asked about how painful it was. The young man that answered said he kept his mind distracted so that he didn't feel it quite so much. They had had other training as they grew up on how to take their minds away from pain. Makes me shudder to think about it! By the way, they burn tires & rub the ashes over their bodies to make themselves blacker during these months away from their families. The young one said he missed his mother. Very sad! Notice how the middle sized boy is looking at George's binoculars? They were really intrigued by them. We all let them handle them & strangely enough they kept wanting to look through them backwards! Not sure why. The other boys were just dressed in traditional Maasai warrior garb, trying to make a little money by taking pictures with the tourists. But I think Lube figured if he was giving the young boys some money, he should support the older ones also!



On the short drive back to the lodge, we stopped at a couple of local craft shops. The first was a group of men who had previously been caught poaching & were convinced that wood carving for tourists souvenir sales would be both safer & more financially sustaining than poaching! It seems to be a thriving business & they were making beautiful products! Then on to a group of ladies that were making rugs & baskets from dried palm leaves. The needle was made

from cow bone. We were given a chance to try several things. I helped connect the strips previously woven together to make the rugs. Joyce & Debbie were both weaving the strips. I bought a nice little basket that I'll use for a candy dish this fall in Mesa!



Back to the lodge, we have lunch & then head back to our cabins for a short break. The Grey-capped Social Weavers were busy busy & the Dik Dik came back to visit too.



We met about 4pm for a nice walk down to the edge of Lake Burunge. Along the way Stanley & Lube educated us about all sorts of things – medicinal plants & how the Dik Dik chooses a spot for his toilet & always comes back to the same spot & usually covers it much like a cat (trying to protect his whereabouts from predators!). Showed us the toothbrush plant & proports that is why the Maasai have such good teeth – they chew on it all the time!



Almost to the lake, Lube pointed out the large herd of Zebra while Stanley circled around to our right. Soon the Zebra started running – Stanley was chasing them! It was fun to see them at full gallop past us. But they weren't too afraid, as soon as Stanley stopped running, they did too – allowing us some really nice close ups of them, against the lake &

against the mountains to our north & west. These hills are the beginning of the Great Rift. We'll drive along it tomorrow.





While along the lakeside, they told us that the Tarangire River terminates in this so called evaporation pan. The depth of the Barunge Lake varies greatly. The Zebra were basically isolated on this side of the lake several years ago when the lake had gotten very deep & they couldn't cross it. At that time, the lake also covered a lot more area – it came almost under the deck of the lodge. This year they hadn't gotten much rain here & they thought it might come close to drying up. There were White Stork & Spoonbills along the shore & we also enjoyed watching a busy nest of  $\frac{3}{4}$ " ants. They were cutting, carrying, & stacking small grass stems. Quite enjoyable!



We showed up for sunset on the deck & did a toast to friends who hadn't been able to come with us! Most notably, Ken & Sue and Dan & Sandi! The Genet came out to visit once again. And so ended our time at Lake Burunge! We'll be off to the next adventure early tomorrow!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicsts.shutterfly.com>

**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 27, 2018 1:41 PM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #17 - Maasai Village & drive to Karatu

Hey there! We have a couple of days of things other than safari! Hang in there! It's pretty darn interesting!



Up a few minutes before 5am! Amazing how we can deal with what ever schedule is required! Can't say I loved getting up this early, but it was nice to see the sunrise over the lake & hear the birds! I had forgotten to get any pictures of the inside of our tent cabin here, I did get a view through the window from our deck to the inside & then I downloaded a

photo from their website, but this is a 2 bed cabin & ours only had one bed, but you get the idea. It was a lovely place. Hated to leave!



After breakfast, we stopped to hear from a Sesame farmer. None of us had ever seen how sesame seeds make it to our spice cabinets or onto our bagels! Lube happened to see him outside working in his field, so we stopped & he told us how he cuts the stalks, bundles them & dries them. Then after they are dry, he lays them on tarps & shakes them to allow the seeds to fall off. Then he bundles the seeds & sells them at a market. Several of us tried it – backbreaking work! One thing I noticed was his pretty pink shirt & lace pocket jeans! Nothing like field work in style, huh? I’ve mentioned it before, but can’t quit thinking about how they must think the Americans are the most drab of dressers! All our khaki/tan/off white outfits! As we continued on, I finally got a picture of the piles of black something that we had seen along side the road. Turns out it was sunflower seeds & they are extracted from the plants much the way he described collecting the sesame seeds. These people work really really hard!!! Can’t believe I never got a picture of the Sunflower fields. They were all around & just full of huge healthy looking sunflowers!



Next stop was the Maasai Boma for our Day in the Life visit. First up was the Cow Blood drinking ceremony. Lube asked us before it started if any of us were particularly squeamish (nope!). Said he had had someone in a previous group faint on him! He showed us the spear type tool they use to pierce the skin of the cow's neck on the jugular vein. Someone holds the cow's head to try & keep it from jerking & causing any other damage than a small cut. They even hold up cloth to prevent it from seeing the chief kneeling at his throat. Milk is already in the gourd container before the blood flows into it. Besides the ceremonial aspects of this procedure, the drinking of the blood & milk is a substantial percentage of protein & vitamins for the chief & head men of the Boma. Marlyn & Dan were the only ones that were brave (crazy?) enough to try it. Marlyn said the milk tasted curdled & that was worse than the blood, but he took 2 tastes!



The ladies of the Boma brought out Shuka – the Maasai word for the cotton sheets that they wear wrapped around themselves – both men & women. They started wearing these rather than animal skins back in the 60's. After getting us all dressed up, they asked us to participate in a tribal dance. I suspect we all have Maasai spouses now – it seemed to be a wedding dance, but we all had a lot of fun with it. Michele was declared the winner – not sure if it was because of her love of the baby before we started dancing, or her expertise exhibited during the dance. I personally thought that Debbie did pretty darn good too! Her male partner was grinning from ear to ear!



Then we headed down to the near by water hole & after giving away the remaining filters we had with us, they had us help them bring back the water & some thatch. I noticed that my bucket only had about a quart of water, rather than the 5 gallons they normally carry & I still struggled! The water would slosh with every step & was almost impossible to hold steady!!! Then we divided into groups & the women helped with the regular day to day chores while the men

gathered into their watch, talk, (& in our case take pictures) group! I elected to help thatch rather than spread the mixture of mud & cow dung on the hut walls. I definitely got the easier of the chores! I'm sure we all did more damage than help (my rump had made a dent in the roof I was supposed to be thatching!!!). But they were good sports & we all laughed a lot.



We did a little shopping before we said our goodbyes. Michele got to play with another “kid.” The children were all watching as we headed out!





We had several hours to drive to our next lodge in the Karatu Region. We were heading higher along part of the Great Rift that divides the African continent. Along the way, we were occasionally slowed down by herds of animals in the road – like these donkeys! Sometimes our view was of small towns, sometimes of views down into the valleys, sometimes of the muddy dirt cliff faces. We stopped in one small village for Lube to buy us some red bananas. They were like regular bananas, but a little sweeter. We certainly enjoyed the snack. We passed a memorial to the 37 (32 were school children) people who perished when a school bus skidded off the road in the rain last May. Lube had been headed to meet a tourist group & had been there to try & help. Terribly sad event. The government took responsibility for the crash – said the roads were too dangerous. It paid for a huge National funeral & gave compensation to the families of those killed.



We arrived at the Ngorongoro Coffee Plantation & Lodge in Karatu in time for lunch. This place is a garden of Eden! We only had one night here (our only 1 night stand on the entire trip!), but we'll come back here at the end of the trip for a couple more nights. Our lovely lunch was served in an outdoor gazebo & then we were shown through the

garden grounds to our rooms which were huge & beautiful. Besides the flowers, I spotted a gorgeous White Browed Robin Chat hiding in one of the bamboo stands.



After a short break to settle in (only about a half hour!), we met Lube for a walk through some of the many acres of this multi lodge resort. Turns out that when we return, we'll be upgraded to the more expensive side! Wow! These rooms were amazing. Can't imagine what the other side will be like!



Then we met a young man on staff who showed us the Coffee plantation & garden, then actually made us some fresh coffee! It was yummy. Several of us tried to purchase some of the beans, but they don't export the ones from this plantation, they only grow them to serve here! Phoey! Also noticed a Maribou Stork on the roof of the main lodge building! Looked like he was here delivering babies!



Completed this amazing day by gathering on the outside deck for Happy Hour & some entertainment. Turns out our guide was also a part of a local musical group & they played for us. Also invited us up to dance. Both the men & the ladies (but not together!!). Dinner was served inside. This place is awesome!

Had intended on including some of the next day's adventures, but already too long winded! So here's a good place to stop for now! Tomorrow is another experience. Hang tight!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Friday, June 29, 2018 11:07 AM  
**To:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #18 - Oldupai Gorge to Serengeti

Good Evening Everyone,

All of us were feeling the end draw near! Every morning when we got up, we were counting the days. Although for 8 of us, it had been a really long trip, we were not ready for it to be over! Anyway, lets get to the drive to the Serengeti – the focus of this second half!



Up a couple of minutes before 6am (gosh that's almost sleeping in!!). Had a really nice breakfast. Couldn't resist sharing a picture of the adorable zebra/giraffe high chair – colored like a zebra, but neck like a giraffe! We stopped at the Ngorongoro Visitors center for an explanation about the crater. I'll talk more about the crater when we descend to the floor on our way back after visiting the Serengeti. But basically it is the largest inactive, intact, & unfilled caldera in the world. It is 6000' deep & the floor covers 100 square miles. The elevation of the crater floor is 5,900'. We saw baboons

all over the road as we drove into the Ngorongoro Conservation area. We were hoping for a view of the crater, but it had rained all night & it was still very cloudy & misty up high. According to the guides it is more often than not misty at the top in the early mornings.

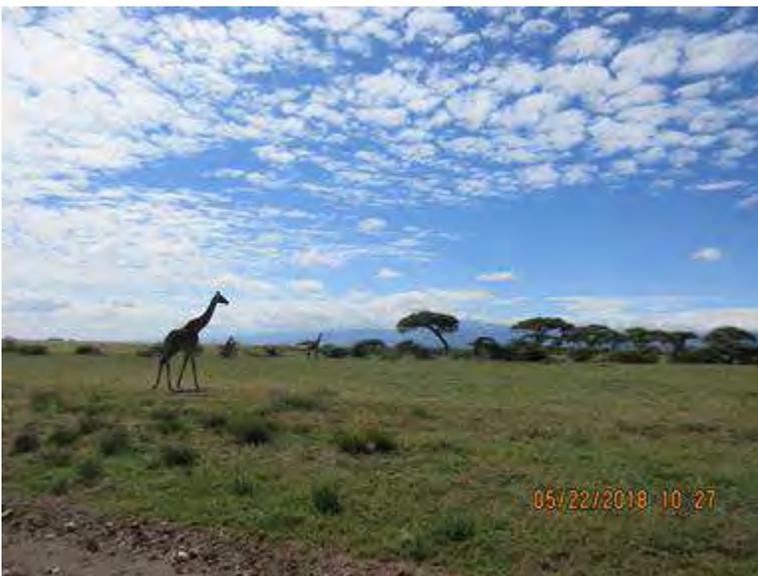


By the time we got to the main viewpoint for the crater, the clouds had lifted enough that we could at least see across. We kept our fingers crossed that we'd have a better view on the way back in 4 days! Then we'd be at the overlook a little later in the day. It was still a magnificent view & we clicked picture after picture! It was rather chilly too.



We descended towards the crater floor, seeing some Maasai Bomas scattered around. There is apparently a lot of controversy because the government forced the Maasai out of Serengeti when it became a park & relocated them here in the Ngorongoro Crater. Then when this area became a World Heritage Area, they have severely limited where they can maintain their cattle. By the way, the name Ngorongoro comes from the Maasai word for the sound of the cow bells

– ngoro ngoro! Agriculture is limited to subsistence farming only. It is still an on going issue. We passed by Flamingos in Lake Magadi (it is a salt lake & it's depth varies greatly from wet to dry season). Besides the occasional cattle herd crossing the road, we came upon a Maasai with camels!!!! That was a shock. Apparently someone donated them & this one Maasai uses them.



Our road took us around the west edge of the crater & on to the plains area. The plains stretched out as far as we could see. Mountains along the far western horizon. Saw a Stride of Giraffes (they were moving along) & some grazing donkeys.



Next stop was the Olduvai Gorge. There is a beautiful amphitheater with a view of the monolith (saw it called “the Castle?”) in the gorge. This monolith provides clear (to a geologist anyway) evidence of the changes in climate of the past million or so years! This is the area made famous by the discoveries of Louis & Mary Leakey from 1929 & on. Actually this area was noted for fossil remains as early as 1911 by German investigators, but their research was stopped by World War I. We got a talk from a staff worker in this gorgeous location. It was hard to concentrate on his words due to the awesome scenery. The one thing that was easy to remember was that as usual – things get confused by languages! The name Olduvai is actually a misspelling & misinterpretation of the natives name for the Oldupai plant (similar to aloe vera) that is common to the area. This plant was very important to them – used for everything from antiseptic to making ropes & cloth.



There was an amazing museum that was just opened last fall. If one was truly interested, you could spend hundreds of hours there – tons of interactive exhibits. I spoke to a professor from Nebraska that said she had been bringing a group of students here for the past 20 years. She was thrilled with the new museum & was wishing she could take the time on her own to study everything, but was tied to her group of 20 young people! But.....none of us were particularly

enthused, so we looked at the pictures & were ready to move on to real life in about a half hour! Bottom line is that the Leakey's had found evidence of the first traces of human kind in this area & through the years additional research has agreed with this being the origin of the first intellectual growth. Okay. I'll take their word for it.



We continued on the long drive on the bumpy dirt road towards the entrance to the Serengeti. There is a proposal to pave this road up for discussion right now. Apparently the government is weighing the pros & cons of increased tourism & harm to the wildlife. This road is a real detriment for the tourist – currently you have a choice of the long (at least 4 hours), dirty, sometimes muddy, bumpy road or the extremely expensive flight into the park. I'm not positive, but I don't think you can fly into the park unless you have a reservation with one of the incredibly expensive lodges that are in the park. We saw some more giraffe, a group of Maasai children, thousands of Wildebeest & Zebra on the horizon (there has been & was still quite a lot of water in the plains area here, which is delaying the migration!) & quite a lot of them up close & personal!



And then, there we were – finally! At the official gate to the Serengeti! Nothing actually here except the gate (not even a portapotty!). The Visitor's center is still a short drive ahead. We stood around taking a few pictures & stretching our legs. After we crossed into the park, we almost immediately spotted our first lion – a female in the grass. She didn't appear to be hunting, so we didn't hang around too long.



We stopped at the Visitor's Center for our picnic lunch. The Coffee Plantation Lodge had been kind enough to provide it – they had even let us pick what we wanted from a buffet set up for us & all their other guests. It is apparently a very common activity – there had been about 30 folks going through the line! Anyway, there was a short climb to a viewpoint & we were eager to head up. Not only to see, but also a chance to get a little exercise!



Beside the view, we had a few creatures too – our first Rock Hyrax on this trip (there was a baby too, but it was too fast for me & escaped my camera!) & our introduction to the Superb Starling that will be our constant friend! And the colorful Rock Agama. The Splendid Starling was there to clean up our crumbs too.

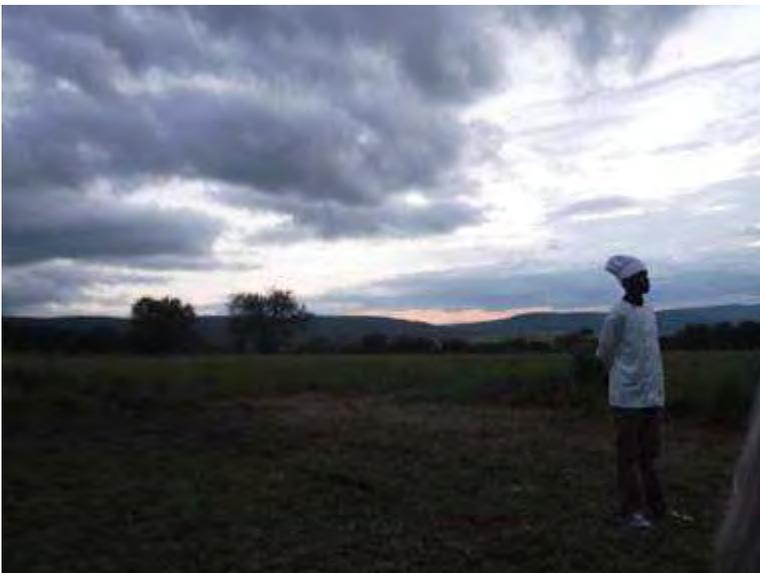


Although we saw a few other animals as we continued our drive to our Serengeti Mobile Tent camp, the best was these 2 male lions. We spotted the first climbing this tree. We stopped to watch as he clumsily worked his way up. After he was up, the other brother popped up & started climbing up right behind him. For a while they were pushing & shoving each other as they vied for the best, most comfortable spot! Although it was great fun watching them, we had to leave

before they both got settled – we still had a ways to drive! I didn't get any pictures, but just after leaving the lions, we ran through a muddy area. It was quite deep. Michele made a comment about not wanting to push & as we splashed into a particularly deep puddle, the engine shut off & Lube said "uh Oh!" We were just starting to look at each other & panic when we realized he was kidding & had turned the Jeep off! He started laughing & we got back on the road. Within a few minutes he told us we were making good time & would only be another 30 minutes. Then we turned a corner & there were our tents! Turns out that Lube is quite a trickster!



So our final few minutes of our drive to camp introduced us to the tsetse fly. I'll tell you more about that later. Anyway, we got our tent assignments & headed off to get settled. We'll spend 4 nights here. Our view out the front of the tent was onto our little covered patio with chairs & a table with a laundry bucket & canvas buckets for them to deliver hot water in the morning for washing our face. We did have a toilet inside & also a sink with cold running water. And a shower. More about that later too!!



We had a few minutes to rest and have our first bucket shower! So here's the way it worked. After we came back from the afternoon activities, a staff man came along behind the tent – we never saw him, but in a really deep voice, he would say "Shau wa?" You would answer yes or tell him a time to come back. After you said yes, you'd hear him pouring water, then a pulley chain noise as he raised the heated water up over the tent. You would then step into the

shower – it was a separate canvas area with a zippered door. The shower water was gravity fed & worked quite well in a hard stream. You had 5 gallons. So you'd get wet, soap up, & rinse off. We do that when we're dry camping in the RV and have done it places in the military too, so not a big deal. George & I had another issue, because the tent was sloped downhill from the shower into the main tent & when I took my first shower, the water was flowing into the bedroom. Oops! So we figured out that when one person was running water, the other would have to hold up the shower wall to help it drain away from the tent. Since you only ran the water to get wet & then rinse off, it was not much of a problem! So then about the time you finished rinsing (was he back there listening???), you'd hear "More Shau wa?" If you said yes, there would go the pulley system again & it was set up for the next person's shower. Worked pretty well. My only problem was that I really really really prefer a morning shower, but that was just not an option. So I would be forced to have 4 cold morning sponge baths! I lived & the cold water was refreshing – Ha!!!! They did offer to deliver a small amount of hot water in the buckets at the front of the tent, but by the time it arrived, we were already ready to go to breakfast. Oh well!

After a little more time off, we headed back up to the campfire area to have a controversial talk by Lube (more about the proposal to pave the road into the park) & then our cook came to tell us what was for dinner! Usually had a cream soup, a salad (usually didn't involve lettuce as that is too hard to clean) & a meat dish with rice AND potatoes (no worries about carbohydrates here!). Then some sort of dessert. Had chicken masala that first night & it was pretty tasty! Dinner was served inside a separate tent with seating for all of use, including our 3 driver/guides. They joined us every night. Wine & beer were provided. They even had Tusker beer! Yippee! The sunset sky looked stormy, but no rain for us – not for the remainder of the trip! We were very lucky!



Neither George nor I had slept too good. I think the tasty lunch packed by the lodge might have started us on the path to Montezuma's revenge! George started first & I followed a couple of days later. After chatting with others in the group – most started having problems. Either something in the water here in the tent camp or picked up a bug. But didn't keep us from heading out for the morning. We started seeing animals almost immediately after starting out in

the Jeeps before 7am. The jeep in front of us was spinning out as it forded the muddy creek, so Kilo took notes & we flew through! Yee haw! Ken would have loved this one! But much better than getting stuck! A huge herd of elephants were coming right at us & veered off to cross behind our 3<sup>rd</sup> jeep. Then a Lippet faced vulture posed for us. He's the biggest of the vultures. He has a clean pink face so that he can rip & tear carrion without getting blood & guts in feathers! Good to know, right?



Almost immediately Lube spotted a leopard in a tree. It was totally relaxed & comfortable. Then even more exciting – Michele realized there was a baby in there too! Couldn't see the young one's face, but loved the way it was sprawled over the branch. Obviously not expecting any trouble! We stayed for a while, just watching them sleep!



The animal parade continued! At a nearby water hole, we saw a HUMONGOUS crocodile & hippos & a Fish Eagle & more hippos & then another big healthy looking herd of elephants with lots of babies. & all of this in beautiful sunshine with a clear blue sky!



We took a short pee break at the airport. It was really clean & modern & I mostly just got pictures of the pictures on the wall, so nothing there to share. There was even a security check in and out! And then the animal parade continues – More & bigger pod of hippos, a lovely herd of Hartebeest, a family of warthogs.



And then a string of birds! I was in heaven! A Short Tailed Lark, Double Banded Courser, Ring Necked Dove, Crowned Plover (or Lapwing), Secretary bird, Lilac Breasted Roller, & Common Shrike. Check out the thorny acacia trees that the last 2 are perched in. Makes me hurt to just look at it!



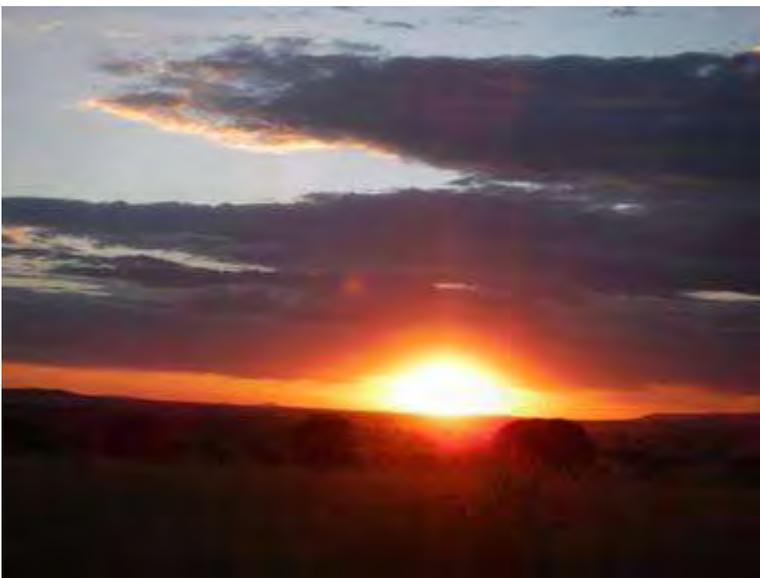
On the way back to the lodge, we spotted our only baby Hartebeest, nearby there was a Brown spotted hyeana! Keep that baby Hartebeest safe Mom!!! Then a Topi & a heard of Impalas with the Cape Buffalo. A single Male irritable elephant & an interesting find – these are a totally different kind of Water bucks – they are called Defosse Waterbucks & they don't have the toilet bowl rings on their butts! They have a scruffy looking mane. Very interesting.



After lunch we had a talk from Lube. Wow! OAT insists that controversial topics be discussed. Wow! He brought up a story about a young girl that became pregnant while working for a teacher & his family. This was a situation that he remembered from school. It is strictly taboo in his culture to become pregnant without being married. When her Aunties questioned her, she admitted that the teacher had raped her. The Aunties formed a committee & went to the

school & burned his school room!!! He remembered being in the school & seeing the group of angry women approaching with torches!! He asked it that would happen in the US. Humm. Maybe! Then we took a short break to relax & nap. Headed back out again about 2:45pm. Went a different direction this time & saw a few things, but didn't stop because we were headed to this lake to see the Flamingos! We spent quite a while (half hour maybe?) watching them. Soooooo much fun. They would march one direction & then suddenly stop & march the other direction. Heads were turning back & forth. Just awesome. They lift their legs like they are marching in a German army! And then Stanley pointed out a Blacksmith Plover with eggs on the beach! Had never realized that they call them that because they make a metallic noise when they fly! Really cool. Hope these eggs make it, but they are just right on the beach – so afraid they will get crushed before the babies hatch!





Flamingos on our table for dinner!!! And a fabulous Serengeti sunset!!! So ended our first full day in the Serengeti! Wow! Amazing! Tomorrow morning is our balloon ride! Yippee!!!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

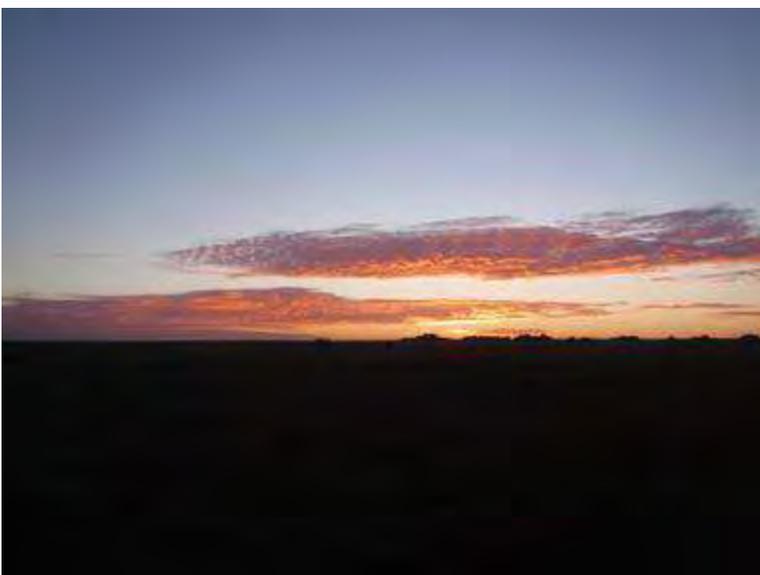
**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Saturday, June 30, 2018 5:09 PM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #19 - Serengeti Balloon & More

Hi Guys,

No time to waste! We have things to talk about!!



Up at 4:10am! Out to meet our ride to the balloon at 4:45am! We had time to stand around drinking coffee & watching the stars (incredible sky – saw 4 shooting stars!!!!) a few minutes until our 2 jeeps showed up to take us to the Balloon “airport.” But it was almost an hour’s drive away & even though it was dark, we were flying! Saw a hyena on the side of the road. We were barreling down the rough dirt roads & near ran into these 2 big hippos! Whew! Stand off until they

decided it was okay to go. Then a 3<sup>rd</sup> one, even bigger, came out of the grass & followed them across! Got to the airport (which is just a flat field in the middle of nowhere – doesn't even have a porta potty – just grass in back of the jeep!) in time to see the sun come up! And turns out we are very lucky – yesterday's Balloon safari was canceled due to high winds! Today it was just perfect, not totally still, but easily navigable.



Our Captain Adebe gave us a safety/instruction briefing while the team worked on getting our balloon blown up. Now I've forgotten the details, but I believe these are the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest balloon baskets used in the world & holds 17 people, 4 sections with 4 each & the Capt/driver in between.



The balloons were blown up using these huge fans. The basket is lying on its side. They had to use a jeep to line up the basket to the balloon & keep the ropes taunt. I've included a picture from when we landed to show you how folks were loaded in. The top row of each section has to lift themselves up to slide in, the folks on the bottom (that was us with Joyce & Connie) just slid in on the ground level. It was really easy on us. You have a car buckle that latches to a chain for safety.



So the first picture was looking directly up as I was lying on the ground. Then to the side of me was the Capt's area with the gas burners. As they fill the balloon above with hot air, we started to stand up. As we slid in, we were in a sitting position on a bamboo bench with our knees above us, with a hand grip in front of us. So as the balloon lifts us off the

ground, you become upright on the bench. The last photo is just to give you an idea of how the flame looks – it was not from one of our flights.



The balloon starts lifting the basket upright & we start getting oriented. The Capt is the first totally upright & as soon as the basket is straight, we are allowed to stand up. The ground team kept us steady from the ground until everything was stable.



As we lifted off, we look back & see that we are the first to take off. We were really really excited. All of us were grinning from ear to ear like we'd done something special! This was an incredible experience. If you ever go to the Serengeti – DO NOT MISS THIS EXPERIENCE. It is expensive, but man oh man, it is worth it.



At first we were just excited – so took a selfie. Caught a big smile from Don! And even excited over seeing our own shadow!



Then we started realizing how much we could actually SEE below us. This beautiful Umbrella Acacia has a Lilac Breasted Roller in it (bottom left center!). And of course the Balloons following us. This tree was absolutely full of birds (it was still early – so they were still roosting!). There were Egyptian Geese & several types of vultures! This creek had hippos in it.



The sun was still giving us a beautiful sky & we started flying lower over the hippos.



During that 45 minute float over the savannah, I took over 300 pictures with 2 different cameras!! And I'm using some of George's too – he took at least 30 with his phone! We had been warned that it would be noisy, but we didn't notice that at all & I was right beside the gas jets. I'm assuming that the difference is because this was quite a huge balloon & the jets were quite a bit above us. I've read since that these were called "whisper" jets. My memory is just of floating

quietly – sometimes moving lower – the animals would notice us - & sometimes drifting slowly higher. Our Capt called folks on the ground to report our speed & locations of animal sightings. If we could have done it, we would have done another one.



There is a big hippo out of the water in the first picture. We saw more hippos, both in & out of the water than we've ever seen anywhere – even in the Okavanga Delta. The hippo in the 3<sup>rd</sup> picture was close enough that we thought we could feel the spray when he snorted at us!



We saw lots of other animals too – a pride of 6 lions, some ostriches, several giraffe, topi, zebras...some with no pictures, like a Scrub Hare – too funny to get close enough to the ground to see a hare jumping! But he was big – like a Jack Rabbit. And some hyenas. And a huge flock of Crested Guinea hens.



We saw our chase vehicles & flew over the location for our champagne breakfast being prepared.



We had started to lower when Capt Adebe spotted a huge herd of Cape Buffalo & decided we should float over them & land over the next ridge. We chased a herd of Grant Gazelles towards them and as we came closer, they all started to run. As you can see in the 3rd picture, one Cape Buffalo in particular was looking back to challenge us! But it gave up – decided that we were too big to fight. It was amazing. As you can see with the other person snapping a picture, we got pretty close as we climbed over the ridge. We were skimming the ground!



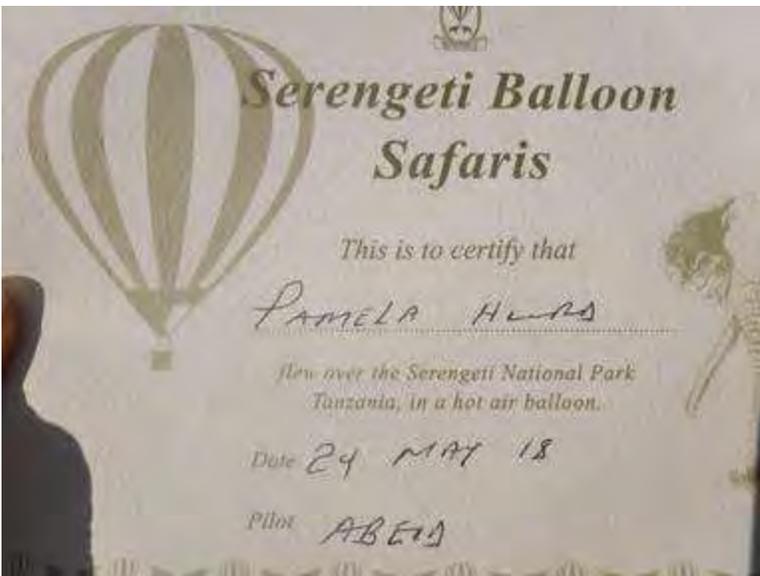
We landed gently upright & then the basket slowly turned on it's side, the same way as it was for us to get in and it was easy to get out. The 4 of us on the bottom slithered out & stood up, allowing the ones on the top row to slide out & drop down. The chase cars were right beside us & we had to wait in the field a few minutes as the other 2 landed & then the balloons were deflated & folded up.



We were all loaded into the jeeps & drove a short distance to where they sat up a table with champagne (and or orange juice) for everyone. One of the Captains told a long involved story about the first manned balloon flight on Nov 21, 1783 in Paris, France. Apparently when the balloon landed it caught the farmers field on fire & burned his crop. Besides thinking that he had been invaded by aliens, he lost his livelihood. Apparently the king had them send him a bottle of champagne as payment & thus started the tradition of champagne to celebrate the landing of a balloon! John & Connie said they got a call once from a balloon company saying their balloon was off track & asking if it could land on their property. It did and the guys brought them a bottle of champagne! Oh yes, one of the French guys names was Pilo & that's where Pilot came from!!



On to our breakfast. It was quite a feast & done perfectly. Met by turban/robed men with copper bowls & pitchers to wash our hands, then on to sit at the beautifully set up table. Our Capt came to congratulate us & the perfect English breakfast was served.



A trip to the toilet was great fun. The regular looking porcelain toilet was set up on a wooden stand (same as in our tents at our OAT lodge), with canvas cover on 3 sides. The 4<sup>th</sup> was open to the grassy savannah view! Fabulous! And then they presented us with a formal certificate. So very cool.



After breakfast, we were driven to the main Serengeti Visitor's center & were met by our guides. While making a potty stop, I spotted this interesting creature in a tree & realized I had found Tree Hyrax! Had no idea there was even such a thing. He looked just like the Rock Hyrax – didn't look like something that should be in a tree at all!! As we headed back to our lodge, we got a really nice close up of this male ostrich. He was just as interested in us as we were of him! And got this great picture of a Goliath Heron!



And then the photo of the day!! Lube found this pride of 10 lions lounging in a tree. Holy smokes. Amazing!



Back at the lodge for a quick lunch & a short nap. Thought I'd share a picture of the electric charging table! Quite a mess, huh?



After our break time, we got a chance to tour the tent kitchen. Holy crap! How on earth did he make anything, much less all the fancy things he served us! And it was hotter than blazes in there. He explained that he had to keep the

windows shut to keep out all the dust. Didn't keep out flies. They were everywhere! Now would probably be an appropriate time to mention that John had been sick & missed the balloon ride. George & I were both having pretty serious diarrhea (George had started an antibiotic & both of us taking Lomatil). I think Connie was better, but Joyce skipped supper that night! Humm? Never had a problem with this on our trip before! Or all the way through Southern Africa on this trip. Guess it's caught up with us!



We went out for a short afternoon safari – didn't stay out for long. We did see hippo & crocodile, Cape Buffalo, misc birds & one lone male elephant with huge tusks. However, the tsetse flies (just Googled & found out that tsetse means fly in one of the Southern African languages) were really really swarming & we made the mistake of opening the top & windows & they started really getting us! We turned around & headed back to camp. The last picture shows a few of them swarming on the window when we pulled back up to the lodge. Luckily for some reason, they don't bother us while in camp & as long as we all sit in the jeep for a few minutes after arriving, they disappear. But we had killed lots of them inside the jeep and a couple were full of blood!! Ick Ick Ick! Felt like this afternoon safari was a feeding time for them! By the way, you can just see a couple of Maribou Stork in one of the Acacia trees between the lodge tent & the kitchen tent. They were regulars that were with us for almost the entire 4 days there. I downloaded a picture of those stinking tsetses! Ick!



That night Lube gave a talk on the way the migration works & told us our plan for tomorrow is to go out for the entire day to find the zebra & wildebeest! We got to thinking it might make for a long day, so we decided to dance tonight! I didn't get a single picture!! But we had a wonderful time. Even the security guys & the kitchen guys came out to dance. Stanley was really good. So now we've danced in Tanzania!

Over dinner that night, Stanley told us of his courtship of his wifie. Neither of them had been promised in marriage as children, so they were free to choose on their own, however, they were from separate tribes that did not get along. Luckily they attended the same church & both sang in the choir. It took him 3 years of silent courtship to win over her family & her hand in marriage. Very sweet.

Gonna stop here & do Migration day in a separate report! Only 3 more nights left in Africa!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pamspics.shutterfly.com>

**pam@gphurd.com**

---

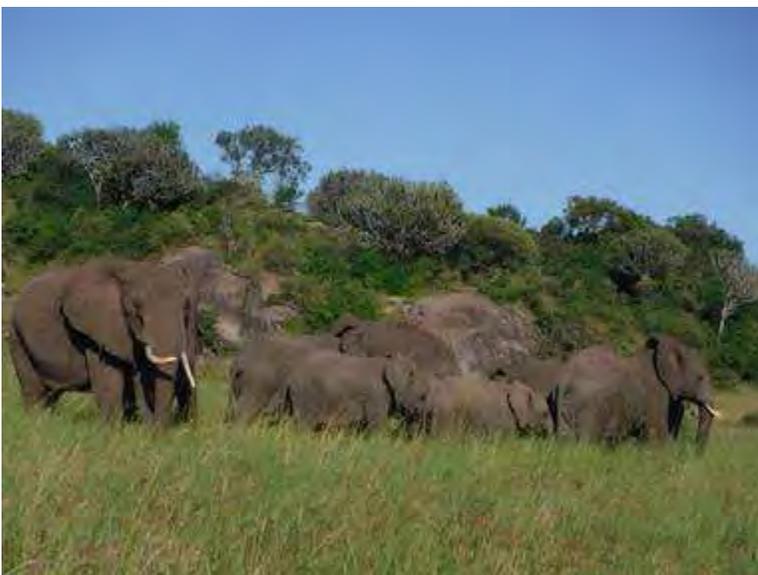
**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 1, 2018 10:48 PM  
**To:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #20 - Serengeti Migration

Hi Everybody,

Getting close now & very excited about it! Let's go! The Migration is waiting!



Our day to find the Migration dawned clear & gorgeous. We were in the jeeps & on the road by 7am!



Our first sighting was 4 balloons in the distance. They max out at 5, so they had a big group today! We had some giraffes run across in front of us & spotted this pair of Black Backed Jackals & a beautiful herd of elephants. We didn't know why at first, but we started out from the lodge going the way we always do & suddenly we turned around &

headed back past the lodge & further south. Found out later that Lube had gotten word about where the migration was & we were headed in the wrong direction!



Our first morning pee stop was at a Ranger station in an area we had never been before. It was rather quiet there, but one of the rangers came in & talked to us some about the fight against the poachers. This visitors center is mostly about

the rhino. There was a story about the previous ranger who had been shot & killed in 2017 for his work in anti-poaching. Dangerous business fighting poaching! There was a huge collection of bones at the entrance & a map showing the locations of other ranger stations throughout the Serengeti. The Ranger there told Lube that we were on the right track for the migration.



One of the first things that we noticed in this area was what is called Kopjes or “island mountains.” They are basically ancient granite rocks that jut up out of the soil. They have their own ecosystem because of the variety of plant life that grow around them. They are usually home to lots of different animals.

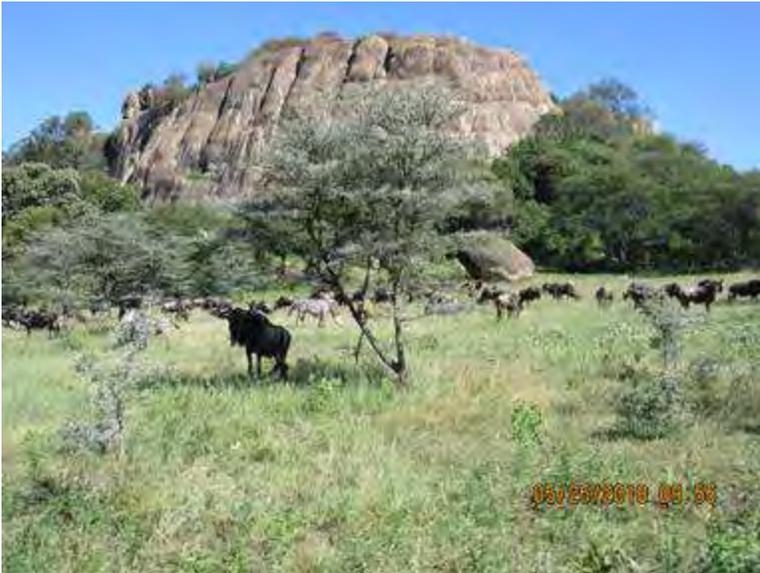


And then – there they were!!! Millions of wildebeest & zebra. They had explained to us before that the zebra actually lead the way. The wildebeest are really too stupid to remember which way to go. They just follow the zebra. They are truly just food chain or maybe chain food? We immediately started taking movies – the noise is unbelievable!!!! I tried to make a small video to attach, but it says it is still too big. I might try to send it separately!



At one point, they were all running from our right to our left – then suddenly the ones in front turned & started running back through the group to our right. Turns out a hyena was there!





Once we found them, they were everywhere! We drove around & through them, seeing them in all sorts of backgrounds. So the joke is that the Wildebeest was made by God of all the spare parts – forequarters from an ox, hind quarters from antelope, tail from horse, mane from lion, horns from Cape Buffalo, & face from a grasshopper!! In some lights, it even seems to have stripes like a zebra! And they seem to have the brain of a partridge (I made that up

myself!). Lube loved driving towards them when they were in the middle of the road & watching how long it took for them to realize we were coming at them & starting to run.



There were vultures everywhere. All types. Including the Hooded Vulture & White headed Vulture and lots of Maribou stork. Notice that some of these have fuzzy feathered heads, that's the white headed vulture. They are all just waiting for their chance. With so many wildebeest around, there were bound to be leftovers from lion attacks! Or animals that were trampled! Stanley had explained that each of the types of vultures have their own specific jobs, like the Luppert faced is strong enough to tear the skin, while others can break up the bones.



We stopped to eat our box lunches at another Ranger Station. Never saw any of them, but found where they were heating up something on a fire – hot water for coffee? Anyway, John took advantage of having a nice comfy chair out in the sun (he’s recovered, but still not in his happy zone!), and I wandered around taking pictures of the good sized Agama Lizard on the walls, another interesting restroom marker, a Red Wing bat, & Little Weavers on tons of nests.



As we turned to head back towards camp, we continued to travel through the migration.



We saw the largest herd of giraffes we had seen on this trip & they were all running! I know they are called a Stride of giraffe when walking – but when running? It was amazing to see them all running! And then another mock attack by a Mother elephant! She was really angry at us – shaking her head & trumpeting! And a troop of baboons heading somewhere with purpose! And another large herd of really healthy looking elephants!



And for our last stop, we stopped to see the Flamingos again. John hadn't been with us when we stopped before. And this time there was a flock of Yellow Billed Storks. They were really pretty. And the Flamingos were just as much fun!



After getting back to our lodge (still had a little fight with the tsetse), we had time for a short nap & a hot shower before meeting to watch the gorgeous sunset & hear about our plan for tomorrow. Our last night in the famed Serengeti. The cook knew we'd stopped to see the flamingos again, so we got them on our table again! So thoughtful! George & I

were not feeling our best, so I didn't even write down what we had for supper!! I do know that we sat with Stanley & are more impressed with him. He's got great plans for his future. Sure wish him a lot of luck!

I thought about continuing on, but decided to let this Migration day stand on it's own! Our departure from the Serengeti was pretty spectacular, so we'll do that in the next report.

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Monday, July 2, 2018 12:24 PM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #21 - Leaving Serengeti

Good Morning Everyone,

I'll just get right into the action of things! Let's go!



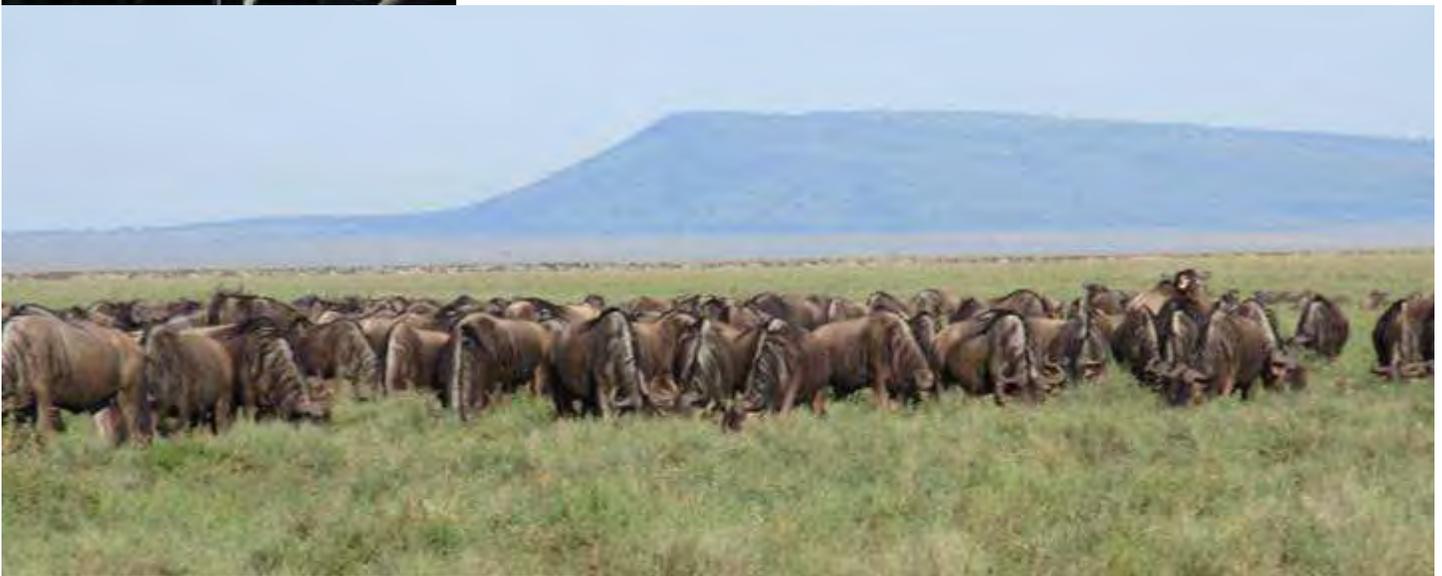


Our last morning in the Serengeti was beautiful. It was crisp & clear & we were ready for the final adventure driving out. All the staff came out to say bye. I distributed my blinkies & they were quite a hit. Glad I had remembered to carry them! The next group will arrive this afternoon, so they will be busy getting ready for them. Not sure I had mentioned before, but OAT moves this camp about every 4 months – following the general placement of the migration. This camp had only been in place about 2 weeks when we arrived. As the migration had been late coming north, they had not been able to find it for the previous groups. We were really lucky! And were lucky with the weather also – it had been quite wet for the ones before us. Yippee! Things had worked out quite well for us! We were told that one of the most exciting times to be here was in February when the Wildebeest drop their fous – up to 8000 a day!!!! But February is not a good travel time for us, so probably won't ever see that. October is supposed to be a really good time also, but not sure how we could have beat this – the weather was awesome, the roads were very passable, & I can't imagine seeing any more animals that we did!! Overall I'm totally satisfied with this trip!





As we started our drive out, it was like all the animals of the park were coming out to say bye to us. I didn't get pictures of most of them. There was another huge male elephant, more giraffe, a huge herd of Cape Buffalo, and the Black Backed Jackals. We saw 3 different couples – the second set didn't want us to leave – they ran in front of the jeep for a long time. Saw lots of birds, but the sun was in the wrong place to get pictures – like a real close up of a Tawny Eagle. There were some new ones – a black capped Raven flying And an African Hoopoe!!! I had mentioned to Stanley on the first day that I'd like to see one – I'd seen them when we were here before. And he nearly threw us all on the floor when he saw this one & slammed on the brakes! Included a Wikipedia picture so you can see how gorgeous it really is!! And even another loving lion couple! Oh so sweet! Ha! And all the antelopes. And even ostriches.



And then – there is the Migration AGAIN! Thousands were crossing the road in front of us!! It was amazing to see them all. Not only the thousands directly in front of us – but look at the horizon between us & the mountain range. It was simply mind boggling! And sometimes there were more zebra than wildebeest! That was beautiful to see also.



We made a short toilet break at the Serengeti Visitor's Center before leaving. We probably had to officially check out, but it was a nice time for us to stretch our legs & say Bye to the park! What an incredible adventure this has been! And now we were anticipating the Ngorongoro Crater – world renowned for its beauty & animal life!



Almost immediately after leaving the park & starting out on that long dusty bumpy road to the Ngorongoro, we spotted this Cheetah having breakfast. Apparently we had missed seeing the chase & the kill by just seconds. She was still very skittish & looking around to see if anything was coming to steal it from her. We couldn't stay too long, we had many

miles to drive...but she was still enjoying the kill alone when we left. Probably only take a little while & the vultures would arrive – along with the hyenas! Hope she ate fast!



The road was even worse on the way out than on the way in! Since there hadn't been any rain in several days, the dust was really bad. We tried to keep distance between our jeeps, but there were vehicles passing us & also coming the

other direction. It was pretty rough! Connie found a way to survive comfortably! They didn't explain while we were driving, but apparently due to damage to the road around the top of the crater, the government had made the road in & out one way. If we didn't make it in by noon, we'd have to make a long circuitous drive to come in the other side – adding more than an hour to our trip. So we were booking right along! Stanley kept us entertained by pretending he was driving in a NASCAR race. He would pretend to weave & bob as we went along.

I think I'll keep this report short so that I can devote a large one to the long afternoon in the crater. I don't want to have to skimp on any of those pictures & I think I'll be able to wrap it up from there.

So hang in there & I'll be back with you soon!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)  
Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)  
Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 4, 2018 2:49 PM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #22 - Ngorongoro Crater

Hi Guys,

So here we go – truly “God’s Country!” Don’t think I’ve ever seen a more beautiful place! Let’s see it together!



When we got back to the rim of the Ngorongoro Crater, we made a quick stop at the overlook. I was better than the first time we'd stopped there, but still not great. We'll have another chance when we leave to head to our lodge. Right now we are using the same roads in & out.



As we dropped down into the crater (check out the road! Not exactly a major highway, huh?), we started seeing more wildebeest. I took this one close up because you can see the stripes on this one. Some have them clearly & some don't.



The base of this crater is a nature made wildlife park. You look around you & everything is green & lush & the animals look like they just walked out of the ark two by two. There are Cape Buffalo, wildebeest, all kinds of birds (another beautiful pair of Crested Cranes), & relaxing hippos. They are just all comfortably enjoying life together!



There were small rivelets of water running through the grass. A bird paradise – there were several types of Ibis, storks, ducks, herons, grebes, plovers, lapwings. Never ending!



Then we had a National Geographic moment. We found a pride of lions – several females with one large male. The male & all the females except one wandered off. The one lone female was eating something. The grass was too high for us to see what. Anyway, we became aware of a pack of hyenas circling the lone female. Soon they made their move & did a snatch & grab to take the kill away from her. She didn't have a chance. Then the hyenas started fighting among themselves & soon one took off at a run with a large hunk of the carcass. He ran right in front of our jeep & across the road towards several big Cape Buffalo that were keeping an eye on him (her?).



We found one of the so called "Big Tuskers." Apparently this is known as a sort of assisted living area for the old elephants. You remember way back in Johannesburg when we went to the Elephant Sanctuary & they told us about the 6 set of teeth for the elephants? Well when that 6<sup>th</sup> set starts wearing out, they can only process soft food, so they

come here where the swampy vegetation is easier to chew. This get to live out the rest of their lives in this lush green beautiful area. Not so bad, huh? Look at the size of those tusks!!!



We made a lunch stop at this lovely lake. There were clean toilets & lots of things to entertain us. We found active dung beetles, Superb starlings to clean up our crumbs, & we were warned that the huge Black Shouldered Kite would be happy to snatch our lunch if we tried to eat outside of the jeep. We didn't want to share, so we ate inside & wandered the area afterwards.



While we all wandered around taking pictures of the hippos and the scenery, we decided to take another group picture.



As we made our way off the bottom of the crater, Lube spotted a black rhino. It was quite a distance away, but we could all see it (once he spotted it out – once again, we have no idea how he ever found these things!!!). Loved that when I first so it, this beautiful little Thomson's Gazelle was right in front of it. Oh yes, one interesting little fact – there are no Impalas inside the crater! Apparently they prefer brushy areas to grassland, so this crater belongs to the gazelles!



So here's an excerpt from the Ngorongoro Conservation Center. <http://www.ngorongorocrater.org/craters.html>

"Flora and Fauna: Wildlife

The area contains over 25,000 large animals including 26 black rhinoceros. There are 7,000 wildebeests, 4,000 zebras, 3,000 eland and 3,000 Grant's and Thomson's gazelles. The crater also has the densest known population of lions, numbering 62. Higher up, in the rainforests of the crater rim, are leopards, about 30 large elephants, mountain reedbuck and more than 4,000 buffalos, spotted hyenas, jackals, rare wild dogs, cheetahs, and other felines.

The legendary annual wildebeest and zebra migration also passes through Ngorongoro, when the 1.7 million ungulates move south into the area in December then move out heading north in June. The migrants passing through the plains of the reserve include 1.7 million wildebeest, 260,000 zebra, and 470,000 gazelles. The Lake Ndutu area to the west has significant cheetah and lion populations. Over 500 species of bird have been recorded within the NCA. These include ostrich, white pelican, and greater and lesser flamingo on Lake Magadi within the crater, Lake Ndutu, and in the Empakaai Crater Lake, where a vast bird population can be observed."

This panoramic photo is from Wikipedia.

Pretty impressive, huh? Like I said, this place was totally amazing!!



Now back to our photos! The clouds had still lifted a little more. Jan Smith offered to take a photo of us & then we all took another group picture. Just in awe of this place. There are a few lodges right around the rim if you wanted to stay here for a few nights. Would have to research them, our guides didn't have much good to say about them for some reason.



Once again Lube made an incredible sighting for us! 2 more black rhinos! Blown up with my little point & shoot, you could tell they were rhinos!!

From here, we drove another hour or so to the Ngorongoro Farm House for our last 2 nights. Decided I'd do that in one last report. We're almost done! I got my Favorite photos loaded onto Shutterfly, so if you just want to look at pictures, feel free to go to my <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](http://Hurd's Round Dance Home Page)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pampicts.shutterfly.com>

**pam@gphurd.com**

---

**From:** pam@gphurd.com  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 5, 2018 10:25 AM  
**To:** 'pam@gphurd.com'  
**Subject:** Africa Again - After Action Report #23 - Final days

Hello Friends & Family,

So we come to the end of this fabulous adventure. Let's get it finished!



Just like our drive into the Ngorongoro Conservation area, we saw baboons on the side of the road as we drove out!



Our last accommodation for the trip was by far the most elegant. The grounds were amazing. Landscaped to look like a million dollars. The check in process was simple & we were soon being escorted to our rooms.



Our room was unbelievable! Huge & airy with a huge bed & windows everywhere.



The bathroom was huge, but unlike that one in Nairobi that was not functional – this one had an awesome shower & beautiful functional sinks.



After a short break to get settled, we headed to our dinner under a clear blue sky with a full moon!





So George & I missed all the goings on the following full day in Karatu. George decided the night before that he didn't feel good & was going to sleep in, but I intended to go. But during the night, I started running a fever & my diarrhea returned with a vengeance, so I called Lube and told him we were both just staying in bed. I slept the entire day – George did get up & spent the afternoon teaching the staff to dance! He didn't get me any pictures! The others went to visit one of the Karatu schools. There were all ages, from young children up to what would be our high school students. I understand that everyone had a wonderful time. They danced & played together. Hated to miss it!!



I also missed a home visit. Phooey!!



Apparently one of the jeeps got stuck in the mud and another had major engine problems & had to go to the shop! Not really sorry I missed that! The pictures are from Jan on her Facebook page!! Thanks Jan!



Apparently I also missed an opportunity to play with a tiny little Love Bird that lived there at the lodge!!

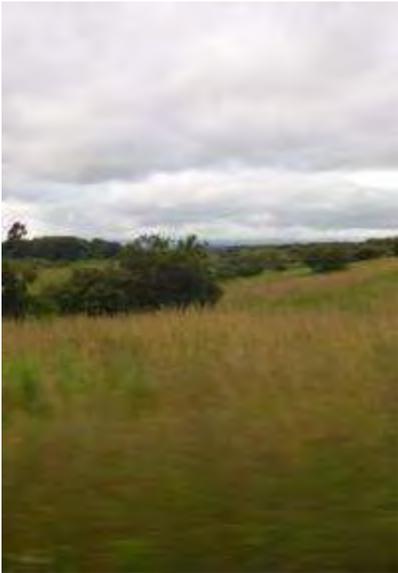


I tried to make it to dinner that night, but just couldn't handle it! Had to head back to the room – at least it was a huge comfy room & lovely bed!





The really bad thing is that I missed Marlyn's birthday party!!!! I could hear the singing in from our room. Seemed like it went on forever! Luckily George made a video for me! I think a good time was had by all. I was trying to smile from my place in the bed! Ha!



We were up at 5:45am for our last full day in Africa!! Luckily, my fever broke about 3am & I at least felt functional! We had bags out, breakfast, & in the jeeps about 7am! The drive was interesting. It was a Monday & like in the US, the

roads were full of people – busy busy! I suppose the vehicles looked a bit different – rarely see someone in the US carrying a huge bundle of grass on a bicycle or lines of motorcycles waiting for a fare, but the idea is the same! Ha!





First stop was amazing. The African Galleria is basically a souvenir shop. But that's kinda like saying that the Smithsonian is a museum! This place was unbelievable. I'm not sure I even made it into every room – it just went on & on – like a spider web. You'd branch off in one direction & that connected to something else. The items sold ranged from \$1 for little trinkets to \$500,000 for some of the real antiques. Saw lots & lots of stuff for \$15,000 - \$20,000. And yes, that is American dollars! I bought a set of Tanzanite, pendant & earrings. Quite an amazing place & definitely a good stop for the day we're heading to the airport!



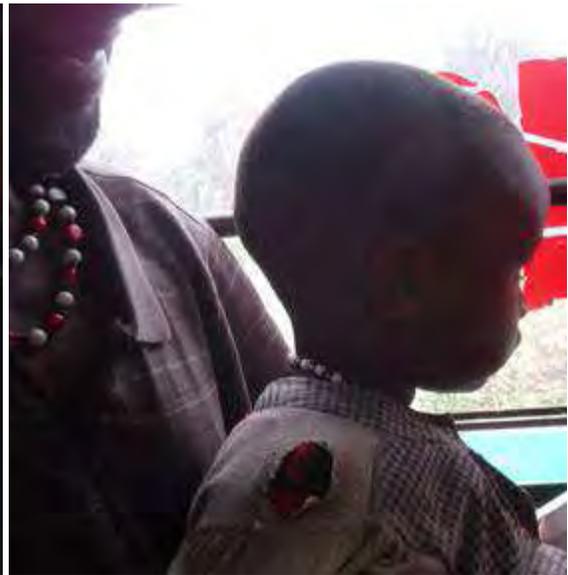
Lunch was at the Arusha Coffee Lodge. Food was good & the setting was wonderful, but service was EXTREMELY SLOW! We were supposed to go across the street to a craft shop sponsored by the lodge that sold items made by the handicapped, but the lunch service took so long that we had to move on. We were already late!



Besides being a restaurant, this stop provided us with one last chance at viewing wildlife! We watched this small dead (or paralyzed) tarantula being moved around by ants & we found this really interesting spider. I Googled him – called a triangular spider – seems to be Australian. I took the picture of the web & that is Jan’s hand that got close enough to allow a better view. I wouldn’t have even thought of that! A funny story, while I was looking for the spider (Jan had

found it and told me where to look), I met this young man, he knew what I was looking for & lead me to one of the webs (turned out they were everywhere in the garden). I chatted with him a little & met his girlfriend too. He was born in Johannesburg, South Africa, but lived in Toronto, Canada now & his girlfriend from there was with him. So, hours later, we were waiting for our flight at the airport & he & his girlfriend showed up! Small world! We were on the same flight to Amsterdam from the Mt Kilimanjaro Airport!





We had one more major adventure on this trip! Lube wanted us to experience the local transportation system!!!! George & I were lucky enough to be sent to a Dolla Dolla. It is a mini van that carries however many can stuff themselves into it. Costs about a US dollar & you just get on when you can flag one down & get off when you say stop! We squeezed in – there were seats that lifted up to allow us to make our way into the 3 rows that were squarshed into it. I sat on the back row between a husband & wife & their 2 kids. She was breast feeding (discretely) her tiny new born & he was holding the 1-2 year old on his lap. George sat in the middle row on the fold up seat. Everyone was very welcoming, but spoke no English. The husband seemed very interested in my fingernails (strange – they are pretty long, but not polished or anything) & my camera. I took a couple of close up pictures of George to show him how it worked. I tried to take a picture of the little boy, but the little boy was really really shy! There was one young man with us that spoke excellent English & he talked to us just a little. But they were all smiling & wanted to be friendly. It was definitely an experience to be remembered. All the others rode a local bus. They said that was extremely interesting also. Glad we only went a few miles & got to get back into our jeeps!!!



OAT took us back to our last afternoon accommodation – the Moivari Arusha Lodge again. They even gave us all rooms to repack & rest for a couple of hours & a snack before heading to the airport. Even the kitty was there to greet us! But didn't see the monkeys.



We had one last chance to see the African sunbird, I think it is a Grey Chinned Sunbird.





We were lucky enough to see a fabulous view of Mt Kilimanjaro! As is common to most of the huge mountains of the world, it is shy & has a tendency to hide behind clouds much of the time. But....it liked us & we got to see her when we got to Arusha the first time & then both on the drive into Arusha & as we took the turn off. The view with the Sunflowers is just from pulling off the side of the highway on the way to the airport! Wow! Oh Wow! Great last memory of this African trip!



We said bye to Lube outside the airport – he said he was not allowed in the terminal, but an assistant stayed with us until we went through Security. We had a short stop at Dar es Salaam, the largest city in Tanzania (on the western coast), but it was after dark, so we couldn't see anything. Then all on to Amsterdam where the Fellowship of the African Adventure broke ranks! Got this funny shot of an airplane on the roof of an adjoining terminal in Amsterdam! It looked

to be a gorgeous day there, but we only had a few hours to transfer from one terminal to the other & go back through security – heavy sigh! 6 of us went on together to Salt Lake City, before flying on to Phoenix. Had a stinking mechanical issue with the plane out of SLC – after we had boarded! Ended up having to deplane (strange word that!!) & wait for them to fix it & then for a fresh flight crew before we continued on. Delayed us another 3 hours – heavy heavy sigh!! But we all made it safe & sound. Our duffle bags got to visit one more time before we all scattered. George & I took our first ever UBER (that’s the Swahili word!). It was very pleasant – the young girl driver told us funny stories all the way to the Blue Lagoon. Back to RV & found everything fine!

So ends the whole 35 night Africa Again Saga! We had a wonderful time & hope you enjoyed traveling with us! If you ever want to travel with us in person, just let me know! We’re planning on Cuba in December, a Celebrity cruise from Singapore to Abu Dhabi in April 2019 and the newest plan is India in Dec 2019! I just set up a group for that and only have 4 people signed up so far! We’d love to have a full group! Contact me if you are interested & I’ll send you a flyer! They release the reserve spaces on July 15<sup>th</sup> back to the public. Already have tentative plans for Turkey in April or May of 2020. Stay tuned for more info about that later.

In the meantime – stay healthy & happy & we hope to see you all soon!

Love ya,

*Pamela & George*

\*\*\*\*\*

Check out our web site! [Hurd's Round Dance Home Page](#)

Check out our dance demo videos [www.DanceRounds.info](http://www.DanceRounds.info)

Look at pictures, videos, & Photo books on Shutterfly <http://pamspics.shutterfly.com>